

Photography Collection

The Harn Museum's photography collection contains more than 1,600 works, ranging from a small group of daguerreotypes and mid-19th century images to large-scale contemporary color works. More than 400 of the photographs in the Harn's collection were acquired by the University Gallery in the 1970s and 1980s before the founding of the Harn. The works include highlights by many major photographers, such as Robert Frank, Harry Callahan, Irving Penn, Ken Josephson and Robert Rauschenberg. Large groups of works by former University of Florida professors and students and other photographers from the region also comprise a large portion of the works acquired by University Gallery.

Robert Frank's photographs from his seminal 1955 series *The Americans* and Irving Penn's platinum print portrait *Two Women with Nose Rings, Nepal* are among many treasured works that could not easily be acquired today. The strengths of the collection are primarily in its post-1960 American works. Jerry N. Uelsmann, who established the University of Florida as a center of photographic studies, is well represented by a comprehensive collection of more than 100 works. Of particular note are two recent inkjet prints, each almost six feet tall. They are Uelsmann's largest works to date. Other mid-20th century highlights include important works by Edward Weston, Diane Arbus, Minor White and Wynn Bullock.

The Harn Museum of Art has a strong history of photography exhibitions, but collecting photography has been a priority only in recent years. The Melvin and Lorna Rubin Fund for the acquisition of photography has recently supported important purchases, including an outstanding group of 19th century Western landscapes by Timothy O'Sullivan, Carleton Watkins and F. J. Haynes.

The Harn's collection of contemporary photography has become a great strength through acquisitions by both the curator of contemporary art and the curator of photography. This collaborative collecting across formal departmental lines provides a wide range of multimedia and multicultural exhibition opportunities that are especially appropriate to the concerns of contemporary artists and the museum's interdisciplinary universitywide audience.

The Harn's contemporary holdings were greatly strengthened by Martin Z. Margulies's 2005 gift of 29 important photographs by 13 influential artists, including Charlie White, Paul McCarthy, Olaf Brunning, Catherine Wagner and Todd Hido. Other gifts and focused collecting have added important contemporary photographs by Richard Misrach, Cindy Sherman, Carrie Mae Weems, Robert Adams, Ana Mendieta, Louise Lawler, Dan Graham, Catherine Opie, Nan Goldin, Roni Horn, Allan Sekula, Sergio Vega, Andrea Robbins and Max Becher, and Sol Lewitt.

The diversity of the Harn's photography collection is one of its strengths, especially when the photographs are understood in conjunction with other Harn holdings. Sol Lewitt's systematic study of a sphere lit from 28 directions or Roni Horn's blurred photograph of a clown can be seen in conjunction with serial and conceptual work in the contemporary galleries. Their distinctive photographic character, however, can also be emphasized when they are presented in relation to their historical predecessors, such as Clarence White's study of light on a glass ball made almost a century earlier. These kinds of insights and connections between different artists' works are central to the expansion of the photography collection. Rather than try to follow a narrow line to create a seemingly comprehensive historical survey, the Harn's photography collection possesses various strengths that suggest the rich and diverse ways artists have exploited the unique character of the medium with expansive, often multiple meanings.