

## EDWARD WESTON: LIFE WORK



*At precisely the same time that Frank Lloyd Wright uttered the then-blasphemous words that "the machine is no less, rather more, an artist's tool than any that he has ever had or heard of, if only he would do himself the honor of learning to use it," another American artist was finding in a machine the medium through which he would, years later, cause his fellow men to become aware of the beauty and the significance of the commonplace. That man was Edward Weston, also of the middle West, also filled with the instinctive feeling for creation which the elders choose to term "rebellion."*

-- Merle Armitage, 1932

Edward Weston: Life Work is a newly-updated 115-image survey of this great American artist, containing an outstanding grouping of vintage prints from all phases of Weston's five decade career. Previously unpublished masterpieces are interspersed with well-known signature images. A striking 1909 outdoor Pictorialist study of his wife Flora is perhaps Weston's first nude, while a multiply-mounted 1907 landscape features a cow skull in the Mojave desert, presaging by thirty years his later interest in death in the desert. A smoky view of the Chicago River harbor, from 1916, pays homage to Coburn and Stieglitz, and anticipates the urban modernism famously captured by Armco Steel, Middletown, Ohio, 1922, which marked his final break from the confines of Pictorialism and studio work, and the emergence of a sharply focused style.

"To survey chronologically his oeuvre is to witness a purposeful and heroic shelling away of subjective addenda, of all the trimming that, to the average observer, transmutes a photograph into a work of art," wrote the Mexican painter Jean Charlot. In the mid-1920s Weston unleashed his newly trimmed-down approach in Mexico with *Tina Reciting*, *Heaped Black Ollas*, and *Excusado*. Upon his return to Glendale in 1927, Weston continued to experiment with pure form and disconcerting scale shifts in his long exposures of shells, peppers, mushrooms, radishes and kelp. These memorable still lifes, which Weston termed "quintessences," segue naturally into a remarkable set of sculptural nudes done in 1933-1934.

Subsequently, Weston pulled back and loosened up his style considerably, as he turned to the open landscape. This exhibition includes an important suite of six dune studies made near Oceano, California in 1934 and 1936. In addition to landscapes and studies of desert detritus made with the support of a Guggenheim grant, portraits of prominent artistic and literary figures are also well represented. The chronological survey concludes with Weston's consummate final photograph, nicknamed The Dody Rocks, 1948.

Edward Weston: Life Work is drawn from the significant private collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg. Most of the works were acquired from members of the Weston family. These include a large collection from his daughter-in-law, Dody Weston Thompson, as well as a Weston family album incorporating rare early self-portraits and landscapes.

The accompanying award-winning monograph, published by Lodima Press, contains insightful essays by Sarah M. Lowe and Dody Weston Thompson as well as "his and hers" collectors' prefaces by Hochberg and Mattis. Featuring full-size reproductions and printed in 600 line-screen quadtone on two different paper stocks for maximum fidelity to the originals, it is acknowledged as the most beautiful book ever published on Weston.

Further information from the publisher about the book may be found here:  
[www.lodimapress.com/html/weston.html](http://www.lodimapress.com/html/weston.html)

This show is accompanied by a 30-minute video, Remembering Edward Weston, featuring interviews with Charis Wilson (his wife), sons Brett and Cole Weston, Beaumont Newhall, and Dody Weston Thompson. Courtesy the Museum of New Mexico.

## EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Number of photographs: 115  
Rental fee: \$15,500 for 8 weeks  
Additional weeks may be booked for an extra 10% per week.