



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ICP to Present *Actual Size! Photography at Life Scale*  
On View January 28–May 2, 2022**



Tanya Marcuse, *Woven N° 30*, 2018, 62 x 160 inches. © Tanya Marcuse

**NEW YORK, NY (DECEMBER 15, 2021)**—How big can a photograph be? And how small? *Actual Size! Photography at Life Scale*, on view at the International Center of Photography (ICP) from January 28 through May 2, 2022, is a playful yet philosophical exhibition of more than 20 diverse images that share the same dimensions as life itself. Curated by David Company, ICP's managing director of programs, and conceived especially for ICP's unique double-height gallery and 30-foot spotlight wall, the exhibition is a rethinking of the fundamental qualities of the elastic medium of photography in which images can be reproduced as small as postcards or as large as billboards regardless of their real-life dimensions.

*Actual Size! Photography at Life Scale* explores what happens when a photograph is the very same size as its subject matter—when a photograph of a bus is the size of a bus, when a photograph of Muhammad Ali's fist is its actual size, when a postcard of hail stones records their sizes for posterity. Image makers of every kind, from fine artists to advertisers, have explored the strange magic that happens when the photograph becomes an uncanny double for the world it depicts. Works by Ace Lehner, Laura Letinsky, Kija Lucas, Tanya Marcuse, Aspen Mays, Jeff Wall and others share the walls with anonymous posters, magazine spreads, and book covers.

The exhibition will be showcased in ICP's downtown building at 79 Essex Street in New York, which opened in January 2020 and unites the museum and ICP's school for the first time in over 20 years. On view concurrently will be *A Trillion Sunsets: A Century of Image Overload*, which examines the compulsive fascination with the proliferation of photographic images.

"In 1946, writer Jorge Luis Borges described a society that wanted a map of its land so detailed that it eventually covered the land itself," said exhibition curator David Company. "Of course, the map was useless and the inhabitants took to living on it as it disintegrated. *Actual Size!* is a homage to Borges' wild but serious idea, showing us new ways to consider what a photograph is, and what it can be."

### **Exhibition Highlights**

Life scale is common in painting but much less so in photography. In 1967, Mason Williams made an actual-size image of a 36-foot-long Greyhound bus. Printed on billboard paper and made in an edition of 150, each one took nine hours to assemble. It was then folded and placed in a box, on the side of which was written: "Do Not Open in the Wind." Seeing Williams's billboard-sized, 1:1 scale bus up close in a gallery offers a joyous example of what a photographic image can be.

Tanya Marcuse photographs sections of the forest floor and fields in almost hallucinatory detail, creating epic photographs that evoke grand tapestry, abstract painting, and cinema. In *Woven N° 30*, 2018—which is over 13 feet long—nature is in abundance, in all its cycles of life, decay, death, and rebirth. Plants, animals, fungi, and soil appear life-size, conjuring a spooky yet documentary feeling.

Jeff Wall conceives his dramatic pictures at life scale, with people and objects appearing at nearly the dimension they would be if viewed from the position of the camera. This can intensify the viewer's imaginary relation to the scenarios, most of which are reconstructions from Wall's memory. When Wall began to work this way in the late 1970s, it was a break with the small print sizes that were common in photographic art. *Approach*, 2014, which depicts a woman draped in a blanket adjacent to a cardboard shelter under a freeway, is an example of how Wall invites the viewer into his perspective.

Actual size imagery has also given great energy to magazine design. In 1974 and 1975, *Esquire* ran memorable features on the body parts of sports stars. Readers could measure themselves against Muhammad Ali's bandaged fist, or soccer star Pele's muscular thighs. The *Esquire* spreads will be shown alongside magazine advertisements showing wares, such as radios or cameras, at actual size.

### **Programming**

For more information regarding accompanying programming, please visit [icp.org/events](http://icp.org/events) for event announcements.

### **About the Curator**

David Company is a curator, writer, and managing director of programs at the International Center of Photography, New York. His books include *On Photographs* (2020), *A Handful of Dust* (2015), *Art and Photography* (2003), *Jeff Wall: Picture for Women* (2011), *Walker Evans: The Magazine Work* (2014), and *Photography and Cinema* (2008).

### **Exhibition Access**

ICP is open every day except Tuesday from 11 AM to 7 PM, and until 9 PM on Thursdays. Admission: Adults \$16; Seniors (62 and Over), Students (with Valid ID), Military, Visitors with Disabilities \$12 (caregivers are free); SNAP/EBT card holders \$3; ICP members, ICP students, and all visitors 16 years old and under are free. Admission is by suggested donation on Thursdays from 6 to 9 PM.

Admission to ICP is by timed ticketed entry only to ensure limited capacity and other safety standards are met. Tickets can be reserved online at [icp.org/tickets](https://icp.org/tickets). Visitors are asked to arrive during the 30-minute window of their timed ticket to help ensure a safe flow in the lobby. New York City requires that all museum visitors show proof of vaccination upon entry, and wear masks in the museum. For more information, read ICP's updated [Visitor Information](#) and [Accessibility](#) guidelines and policies.

### **Exhibition Support**

Exhibitions at ICP are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



### **About the International Center of Photography**

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is the world's leading institution dedicated to photography and visual culture. Cornell Capa founded ICP in 1974 to champion “concerned photography”—socially and politically minded images that can educate and change the world. Through exhibitions, education programs, community outreach, and public programs, ICP offers an open forum for dialogue about the power of the image. Since its inception, ICP has presented more than 700 exhibitions, provided thousands of classes, and hosted a wide variety of public programs. ICP launched its new integrated center on Manhattan's Lower East Side in January 2020. Located at 79 Essex Street, ICP is the cultural anchor of Essex Crossing, one of the most highly anticipated and expansive mixed-use developments in New York City. ICP pays respect to the original stewards of this land, the Lenape people, and other indigenous communities. Visit [icp.org](https://icp.org) to learn more about the museum and its programs.

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