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media release



Lewis W. Hine, *Icarus Atop Empire State Building*, 1931. Transfer from Photo League Lewis Hine Memorial Committee; ex collection of Corydon Hine. © George Eastman House Collection.

## Lewis Hine

### The Future of America: Lewis Hine's New Deal Photographs

On view from  
October 4, 2013  
through  
January 19, 2014

Media Preview  
October 3, 2013  
11:30am-1:30pm

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From October 4, 2013 through January 19, 2014, the International Center of Photography will present two complementary exhibitions of works by Lewis Hine, an American original who was a pioneer of social documentary photography.

During the early decades of the 20th century, Hine focused his lens on marginalized communities in America, calling attention to the plight of immigrants, the poor, and child laborers. Trained as a sociologist, Hine sought to awaken the public to the social injustices of the day, and he found photography a tool perfectly suited to accomplish this task. Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, he directed his efforts toward portraying American working men and women who were employed in a wide variety of occupations. Through unforgettable images of individuals and industries that were deeply affected by the economic turmoil of his era, Hine vividly illuminated social issues that are still with us today.

#### Lewis Hine

Organized by the George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y., the exhibition *Lewis Hine* presents a comprehensive overview of the photographer's life and work. Featuring more than 150 vintage prints from the George Eastman House collection, the exhibition begins with Hine's earliest photographs documenting the arrival of immigrants at Ellis Island around 1905 and his gritty images of tenement life on the Lower East Side. Extensive selections from each of Hine's major projects are included, such as his 1910 series on Hull House in Chicago, his visual reports on the activities of the American Red Cross in Europe after World War I, and "Men at Work," a powerful 1932 documentation of the construction of the Empire State Building.

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In addition, examples of Hine's lesser-known projects, including a series of portraits of black Americans made in 1920, are on view. To demonstrate the ways that Hine's photographs were originally encountered by their audience, the exhibition also presents a number of the magazines and books in which Hine's images first appeared.

*Lewis Hine* is curated by Alison Nordström, Curator-at-Large at George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film, which holds the world's largest and most complete archive of Hine's work.

### **The Future of America: Lewis Hine's New Deal Photographs**

In addition to *Lewis Hine*, ICP will present *The Future of America: Lewis Hine's New Deal Photographs*. Organized by Hine scholar Judith Mara Gutman, this smaller exhibition includes the least known but most prescient photographs taken by Hine when he was hired as chief photographer for the National Research Project (NRP), a division of the federal government's Works Progress Administration (WPA) founded in late 1935.

Under an executive order of President Roosevelt, the NRP was established to investigate recent changes in industrial technologies and to assess their effects on future employment. In more than 700 photographs, taken in industrial towns throughout the Northeast in 1936 and 1937, Hine revealed not only working conditions in aging industrial factories, but also in new industries and productive workplaces.

The NRP published hundreds of reports illustrated with Hine's photographs on a broad variety of agricultural, manufacturing, and mining activities. His works captured the look of labor and industry in transition, while the entire NRP story provides provocative parallels to today's economic challenges. The exhibition draws on ICP's archive of more than 300 of Hine's prints from the NRP series and the master holdings at the National Archives.

### **About Lewis Hine**

Lewis Hine was born in 1874 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Hine was eighteen when his father died, and as a young man he had to provide for himself and his family as a factory worker, doorman, salesman, and bookkeeper. After training as a teacher and sociologist at the University of Chicago, Hine moved to New York. It was there, while teaching at the Ethical Culture School, that he first came in contact with photography.

While encouraging his students to use the camera to examine social life in the streets of New York, Hine himself began to make portraits of immigrants on Ellis Island in conjunction with a research project. He came to realize that the camera could be an important weapon for revealing social injustice and effecting change through the power of images. In 1908, he was commissioned by the National Child Labor Committee to photograph the grim working condition of child laborers. This assignment took him to farms, mines, factories, and mills along the East Coast. Hine's photographs proved instrumental in raising public awareness of child labor abuse and helped to instigate initial reforms. These images also represented some of the earliest and most significant contributions to American social documentary photography. In the years following World War I, Hine set out to create a sympathetic portrait of working-class Americans, emphasizing their contributions to American society. His extended documentation of the construction of the Empire State Building in the early 1930s amounts to an ode to the American work ethic.

Despite his early recognition, the continuing use of his images by many governmental agencies, and the support of younger photographers and photo historians such as Berenice Abbott and Beaumont Newhall, Hine during his later years found commissions increasingly difficult to obtain.

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When he died in 1940, he was completely impoverished. After his death, Hine's archives were initially maintained by the Photo League in New York City. In 1951, this entire collection—7,000 prints, 4,000 negatives, brochures, catalogues, and personal documents—was transferred to the George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y.

### **Public Program**

In conjunction with the exhibitions, ICP will present *Lewis Hine Photography*, a panel discussion moderated by ICP curator Kristen Lubben, on Wednesday, October 23, at 7:00 pm. The event will be held at the School at ICP (Shooting Studio, 1114 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street) and feature panelists Alison Nordström, Jorge Ribalta, and Maren Stange.

*Lewis Hine* was organized by the George Eastman House with support from the Terra Foundation in collaboration with Fundación Mapfre, Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Nederlands Fotomuseum.

*The Future of America: Lewis Hine's New Deal Photographs* is made possible with support from Deborah Jerome and Peter Guggenheimer, and with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



### **ALSO ON VIEW**

#### **JFK November 22, 1963: A Bystander's View of History**

October 4, 2013–January 19, 2014

When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963, the event and its aftermath were broadcast to a stunned nation through photography and television. The exhibition examines the imaginative reception of these iconic photographs and includes stills from Abraham Zapruder's famous footage of the assassination, as well as news photographs, snapshots by bystanders, souvenirs, and scrapbooks. Organized by ICP Chief Curator Brian Wallis on the fiftieth anniversary of the tragedy, these visual artifacts demonstrate the active role of photography in negotiating trauma and facilitating mourning.

#### **Zoe Strauss: 10 Years**

October 4, 2013–January 19, 2014

For a decade between 2001 and 2010, Philadelphia photographer Zoe Strauss (b. 1970) showed her photographic works once a year in a public space beneath an I-95 highway overpass in South Philadelphia, mounting her color photographs to the concrete bridge supports and selling photocopies for five dollars. Through portraits and documents of houses and signage, Strauss looked unflinchingly at the economic struggles and hardscrabble lives of residents in her own community and other parts of the United States. This exhibition is a mid-career retrospective and the first critical assessment of her decade-long project.

#### **THE PICTURE WINDOWS SERIES: Gideon Mendel's Drowning World**

EXTENDED through the fall

In conjunction with *A Different Kind of Order: The ICP Triennial*, a large-scale installation of Gideon Mendel's *Drowning World* series occupies the museum's 43rd Street windows.

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**About ICP**

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is the world's leading institution dedicated to the practice and understanding of photography and the reproduced image in all its forms. Through our exhibitions, educational programs, and community outreach, we offer an open forum for dialogue about the role images play in our culture. Since our founding, we have presented more than 500 exhibitions and offered thousands of classes, providing instruction at every level. ICP is a center where photographers and artists, students and scholars can create and interpret the world of the image within our comprehensive educational and archival facilities. Visit [www.icp.org](http://www.icp.org) for more information.

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