

TRUE GRIT

AMERICAN PRINTS FROM 1900 TO 1950

The artists represented in this exhibition sought to convey the mundane triumphs and challenges of American city life. Rejecting the genteel subjects and ethereal beauty of the previous, Victorian era, they instead transferred the grit of urban modernity into the texture of their prints. In these richly detailed renderings of the nation's bustling cities, streetlights glow in the night sky, laundry flutters on clotheslines hung between tenements, steam billows around buildings, and billboard advertisements entice. Labor and leisure play out beneath soaring skyscrapers, above jam-packed

subways, within lively movie theaters and dance halls, and on decrepit river docks. Moments of privacy in apartments appear amid depictions of communal gatherings in art studios and public parks. The individuals depicted come from all walks of life. Their physical and psychological worlds are absorbing, poetic, and occasionally contentious. Stopping to observe the teeming cityscape, such artists as George Bellows, Mabel Dwight, Edward Hopper, and Peggy Bacon captured the small epiphanies and contradictions of life in America during the first half of the twentieth century.

The prints in this exhibition are borrowed from public and private collections throughout Los Angeles. A selection of related photographs from the J. Paul Getty Museum is on view in *True Grit: American Photographs from 1900 to 1950* in Gallery W107.



Non-flash photography and video for personal use are welcome in the exhibition.

Title image: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Gift of Hannah S. Kully

TRUE GRIT

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 1900 TO 1950

During the first half of the twentieth century, New York City experienced unprecedented change and development. Expansion of the mass transit system connected faraway neighborhoods and boroughs, while the construction of skyscrapers challenged the limits of modern engineering. As a center of commerce and culture, the metropolis inspired many photographers to document its growing infrastructure, towering architecture, and increasingly

complex social fabric. Working in the hustle and bustle of the public sphere, New York artists such as Berenice Abbott, Walker Evans, Andreas Feininger, and Lisette Model sought to capture the city's sheer dynamism—its kaleidoscopic movement of people, traffic, advertisements, and bright lights. Displayed together in this gallery, their images provide a multifaceted portrait of the diverse city.

These photographs are drawn from the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum. For a selection of related prints, borrowed from public and private collections throughout Los Angeles, visit the exhibition *True Grit: American Prints from 1900 to 1950*, on view in adjacent galleries.



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Title image: Gift of Nina and Leo Pircher

This material was published in 2019 to coincide with the J. Paul Getty Museum exhibition *True Grit: American Prints and Photographs from 1900 to 1950*, October 15, 2019–January 19, 2020, at the Getty Center.

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