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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, RECEIVES THE LANE COLLECTION,  
ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST SIGNIFICANT GIFTS IN MFA HISTORY**

**MFA Trustee Sandra Lane Gives 6,000 Photographs, Including Works  
by Charles Sheeler, Edward Weston, and Ansel Adams, in Addition to 100 Works on Paper and 25 Paintings**



*Nude, 1936, Edward Weston*

BOSTON, MA (May 21, 2012)—The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), has announced that it has received one of the largest and most significant gifts in its history—the Lane Collection, comprising more than 6,000 photographs, 100 works on paper, and 25 paintings. It is one of the finest private holdings of 20<sup>th</sup>-century American art in the world and encompasses an unparalleled collection of photographs. Included is Charles Sheeler's entire photographic estate of nearly 2,500 works; an equal number of images by Edward Weston, considered the greatest assemblage of his work in private hands; and 500 photographs by Ansel Adams, the largest private collection of his work as well. (The gift brings the number of objects in the MFA's photography collection—currently at 9,000—to 15,000, an increase of 66 percent.) The Lane Collection also features paintings and works on paper by major American modernists, including Arthur G. Dove, Georgia O'Keeffe, Stuart Davis, and John Marin, as well as Charles Sheeler. The gift was made to the Museum by Sandra B. Lane, who, with her late husband, William H.

Lane, has been a longtime Trustee, friend, and supporter of the MFA.

"This gift from MFA Trustee Sandra Lane will transform the Museum's holdings," said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the Museum. "The superb collection assembled by Sandra and Bill is a very personal one, reflecting the Lanes' cultivated tastes and their close relationships with a number of major artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We deeply appreciate Sandra's extraordinary generosity, and are inspired by her desire to share such great works of art with the public so that they can be seen as broadly as possible, both here at the Museum and through loans to other institutions."

The almost 2,500 prints by Sheeler (1883–1965), recognized as one of the founders of American modernism and a master photographer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, represent all of his well-known photographic series—the Cubist-inspired images from his

Doylestown House series (1916-1917), photographs taken at the River Rouge plant on the occasion of the introduction of the new Model A Ford (1927), views of France's *Chartres Cathedral* (1929), and his industrial *Power Series* made for *Fortune* magazine (1939), among others. The 2,500 works by Weston (1886–1958), a pioneering modernist who has been called the “quintessential American photographer of his time,” include his portraits, nudes, still lifes, landscapes and cityscapes, as well as his forays into surrealism. (More than 40 of these Weston photographs are currently on view in *Edward Weston: Leaves of Grass* in the MFA's Art of the Americas Wing.) Among the collection's 500 works by acclaimed photographer Ansel Adams (1902–1984) are his early prints of the High Sierra, Canadian Rockies, the American Southwest, and the national parks. Through the years, many of the works by these notable photographers have been the subject of MFA-organized exhibitions, several of which have traveled both nationally and abroad, and have also been featured in numerous publications produced by the Museum. Most recently, the MFA published *An Enduring Vision: Photographs from the Lane Collection* (2011), which showcases images personally acquired by Mrs. Lane since 1995 as well as those collected by the Lanes together; a related exhibition is planned for 2013 at the Museum.

“My connection with the MFA began when I was a student at Simmons College even before Bill and I met and began coming to the Museum together,” said Sandra Lane, a Boston-area native. “Over the years the relationship has grown even deeper—first with the donation of our paintings in 1990 and now with this new gift. The MFA staff has come to feel like family and the Museum like an extension of my own home. Now just seems like the right moment to announce this gift, as it is something I've been planning for a long time.”



*Lunenburg*, 1954, Charles Sheeler

The gift also features some 100 works on paper, including *ITLKSEZ* (1921) by Stuart Davis, *Our House* (1941) by Arthur G. Dove, *Portrait—Black* (1916) by Georgia O'Keeffe, and *Smokestacks* (1931) by Sheeler, known for his work in multiple media. Among the 25 paintings in the gift are *Skeleton* (1936) by Hyman Bloom, *Lunenburg* (1954) by Sheeler, *Eye Level* (1951–54) by Davis, *Square* (1953) by Franz Kline, and *Movement—Sea and Sky* (1946) by John Marin. These works join the previous gift of 90 important modernist paintings and works on paper given to the MFA by William and Sandra Lane in 1990.

The Lanes, Boston-area collectors and philanthropists, have been dedicated benefactors of the MFA for some 30 years and are “Guardians” of the Museum (representing giving of \$25 million and higher). Sandra Lane has served on the Board of Trustees since 1987, and William Lane served as a Trustee from 1982 until his death in 1995. Their previous gifts to the MFA include Kline's *Black on Green, Red and Yellow* (1948), given in 1974; 40 photographs given from 1984 to 2011; the endowment of The Lane Collection Curator of Photographs, who is responsible for the more than 6,000 photographs in the collection being gifted (which have been on long-term loan to the MFA), as well as The Sandra B. Lane Associate Conservator in the department of Paper Conservation; and the Lane Collection Fund, given in 2003, which enabled the MFA to acquire more than 75 photographs by Czech photographer Josef Sudek. Three galleries in the Museum's Art of the Americas Wing, which opened in November

2010, were named in honor of Saundra B. and William H. Lane and focus on *Abstraction, American Modernism, and Mid-century Expressionism*. There are many works of art from the Lane Collection displayed in these and other galleries located on Level 3 of the wing.

Mrs. Lane is actively involved with the MFA's Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs and its Friends of Photography group, as well as a number of other curatorial departments within the Museum. She is also an honorary gallery instructor, a devoted member of the Art of the Americas Visiting Committee, and the former chair of the Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Visiting Committee. A school teacher by training, Mrs. Lane's dedication to arts education inspires her to share her collection with audiences young and old and to tour these exhibitions widely. Additionally, photographs and works on paper from the Lane Collection are available for viewing, by appointment, in the MFA's Morse Study Room.

"Working with the Lane Collection over the years has been an incredible luxury," said Karen Haas, The Lane Collection Curator of Photographs. "As curators we rarely have the opportunity to delve this deeply into the work of major photographers such as Sheeler, Weston, and Adams, and the experience of collaborating with someone like Saundra Lane—who often knew the artists personally and responds to the pictures with such passion—has been a rare treat."

### **Formation of the Lane Collection**

The Lanes have been lifelong champions of American modernism. Mr. Lane began to collect paintings and works on paper during the late 1940s and '50s, and established the William H. Lane Foundation in 1953 to promote the pioneering artists he admired by arranging for their works to be displayed at museums large and small and in touring exhibitions throughout New England. In the early 1960s, he met and married Saundra Baker, who shared his passion for art, and together they acquired works by the major figures of the modernist movement. In addition to Dove, O'Keeffe, Davis, Sheeler, and Marsden Hartley, these included Charles Demuth, Ralston Crawford, Ben Shahn, John Marin, and Jacob Lawrence. They later expanded their collection to include expressionist pieces by Franz Kline, Hans Hofmann, Arshile Gorky, and Hyman Bloom.

"The Lane Collection is a curator's—and museum's—dream. These modernist masterpieces give us great depth in these artists and the gift allows us to present a full and rich picture of this period in American art. It is a testament to the heart and the eye with which Saundra and Bill formed this amazing collection," said Karen Quinn, Kristin and Roger Servison Curator of Paintings, MFA, who curated the 2004 exhibition *The Lane Collection and American Modernism: Georgia O'Keeffe and Her Times*.

In the 1960s, the Lanes became interested in photography, which was gaining recognition as an art form in galleries, art schools, and museums across the country. They were inspired by their association with East Coast painter and photographer Charles Sheeler, and upon his death the Lanes purchased his entire photographic estate, including nearly every image Sheeler produced, as well as a handful of photographs by other artists, including a rare group of prints by Morton Schamberg. These were the first photographs to enter the Lanes' collection, which is renowned today for the great strength and depth of its holdings of a small but select group of American photographers.

"I wanted to know about art. I was not at all interested in one of everything. I picked out artists I really liked and endeavored to collect their work in depth," said William Lane during an interview videotaped for the 1983 exhibition *The Lane Collection: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Paintings in the American Tradition*.

By the late 1960s, the Lanes began to acquire the work of California-based photographer Ansel Adams, gradually amassing a large collection of his images. Adams and his wife also served as guides, introducing the Lanes to the work of other artists who were part of the dynamic photography scene on the West Coast. Although the Lanes never had the opportunity to meet the photographer Edward Weston, who died in 1958, they developed a close relationship with his sons and purchased from the family the majority of vintage prints by Weston owned by his heirs, as well as some 100 photographs by Weston's son, Brett. During their many trips to California, the Lanes also forged friendships with photographers Imogen Cunningham and Wynn Bullock, purchasing about 100 images by Cunningham and 70 by Bullock.

The Lanes assembled their modernist photography collection from the 1960s through the early 1970s. Following the death of her husband in 1995, Mrs. Lane has continued to collect photography, adding several hundred more images to the Lane Collection, including William Henry Fox Talbot's salt print, *The Ancient Vestry—The Reverend Calvert R. Jones in the Cloisters, Lacock Abbey* (1845), thought to have been Talbot's last photograph, which is currently on view in the exhibition *Silver, Salt and Sunlight: Early Photography in Britain and France* in the Herb Ritts Gallery.

Mrs. Lane's photography acquisitions focus less on individual artists and more on stylistic movements and photographic processes within the history of the medium and across cultures. Wide-ranging and diverse, her collection of more than 500 works includes early 19<sup>th</sup>-century paper-and-glass-plate negative photography, turn-of-the-century Pictorialism, modernist images (both American and European), experimental abstraction, and contemporary works. Works collected by Mrs. Lane as well as those she acquired with her husband are highlighted in *An Enduring Vision: Photographs from the Lane Collection* (2011, MFA Publications), which shows both aspects of the entire Lane Collection through 120 photographic masterpieces. In addition to images by Sheeler, Weston, and Adams, it includes works by Diane Arbus, Edouard Baldus, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Harry Callahan, Adam Fuss, Heinrich Kühn, Dorothea Lange, Margrethe Mather, Duane Michals, Irving Penn, Frederick Sommer, Edward Steichen, Paul Strand, Josef Sudek, and other photographers. The book is written by Karen Haas, The Lane Collection Curator of Photographs, and Lyle Rexer, a critic, curator, and independent scholar.

Complementing the book is a special exhibition to debut in July 2013 in the Herb Ritts Gallery, which features some 40 images that show the depth and breadth of the Lane Collection. These include works acquired by Mrs. Lane, such as rare early 19<sup>th</sup>-century European images, important turn-of-the-century Pictorialist works, and strong contemporary photographs, paired with some of the greatest of the modernist photographs by Sheeler, Weston, Adams, and others that the Lanes collected together.

Paintings, works on paper, and photographs from the Lane Collection have been showcased in numerous exhibitions at the MFA since 1983, when the MFA presented *The Lane Collection: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Paintings in the American Tradition*, a touring exhibition accompanied by a catalogue. In 1987 the Museum organized the first major exhibition of the work of Sheeler to combine the better-known paintings with his photographs and address the relationships between the two. That groundbreaking show was followed by a series of exhibitions and catalogues highlighting the great breadth of the Lanes' photography holdings: *Weston's Weston: Portraits and Nudes* (1989); *Ansel Adams: The Early Years* (1991); *Weston's Westons: California and the West* (1994); *Edward Weston: Photography and Modernism* (2000); *The Photography of Charles Sheeler: American Modernist* (2002); *Ansel Adams* (2005); *The Lane Collection: Recent Acquisitions* (2007); and *Viva Mexico! Edward Weston and his Contemporaries* (2009), as well as two exhibitions of *Modernist Photography* drawing from the Lane Collection (2011). Additionally, in 2004, the exhibition *The Lane Collection and American Modernism: Georgia O'Keeffe and Her Times* traveled to the MFA's sister museum, the Nagoya/Boston Museum of Fine Arts, in Nagoya, Japan, followed by *20<sup>th</sup>-Century American Photographers: Ansel Adams* and *20<sup>th</sup>-Century American Photographers: Edward Weston*, both of which went on view in Nagoya in 2006.

*The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is recognized for the quality and scope of its encyclopedic collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 objects. The Museum's collection is made up of: Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; Textile and Fashion Arts; and Musical Instruments. Open seven days a week, the MFA's hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.; Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 9:45 p.m. Admission (which includes two visits in a 10-day period) is \$22 for adults and \$20 for seniors and students age 18 and older, and includes entry to all galleries and special exhibitions. Admission is free for University Members and children 6 and younger. Youths 17 years of age and younger are admitted for free during non-school hours. On school days until 3 p.m., admission for youths 7–17 is \$10. Wednesday nights after 4 p.m. admission is by voluntary contribution (suggested donation \$22). The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Patriots' Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For more information, visit [mfa.org](http://mfa.org) or call 617.267.9300.*

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