

for immediate release



## D O R O T H E A L A N G E

April 3 - June 26, 2004

Dorothea Lange achieved renown as a documentary photographer with her work for the Farm Security Administration in the 1930's. The urgent clarity of those pictures, meant to publicize the casualties of the Depression, penetrated simple photographic description with an empathy that retains its salience seventy years later. Lange's life, at that time, coincided with her social and political agenda. The pictures she made reconciled the personal with the iconic, and were meant for mass dissemination as anecdotal catalysts for reform.

Lange's later photographs were both a departure from overt pedagogy and a development of her lucid style of documentation. Her "City Life" series, made in Oakland and the surrounding Bay Area during the 40's and 50's, maintained her descriptive precision, but to less explicit ends. These photographs of urban minutia prefigured the coming decade's new documentary style, conflating impartiality with personal experience. Her focus became even more autobiographical in subsequent work, as her family became more central to her life. Lange's daughter-in-law, Helen Dixon, was an especially recurrent model in those years. The lack of an overarching political agenda in these later pictures precluded the public celebrity of her earlier FSA work, but without the didactic component their insight and accessibility deepened, if anything. The universality of Lange's Depression-era images was paradoxically a function of their extreme specificity. The distinct identity of Lange's subjects, together with the context she provided, made her work immanently allegorical. As her life and work became more private, this specificity endured, but gained a subtlety not always compatible with the political exigencies of Lange's earlier work.

RoseGallery's forthcoming exhibition includes several of Lange's iconic FSA images. This familiar context, however, frames an expansive collection of Lange's often surprising later oeuvre, including many previously unpublished images. Pedestrians and commuters from the "City Life" series are carefully plucked from their anonymity by Lange's camera. Her family is lovingly documented in her subtly distinctive style. Also included are pictures taken on Lange's trips accompanying her second husband, Paul Taylor, to Asia, Egypt and South America. An agricultural economist, Taylor was instrumental to many of Lange's photographic excursions during the Depression era, and the broadening scope of his investigations engendered many of Lange's trips abroad. RoseGallery's exhibition includes selections from Lange's work in regions as remote as North Africa and Hong Kong, and as intimate as her yard. The result is a testament to the honesty of vision, longevity and consistency of an artist already venerated but perhaps not entirely understood.

Dorothea Lange - An exhibition of vintage silver gelatin photographs by Dorothea Lange will be on view from April 3, 2004 through June 26, 2004. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, April 3, from 6 to 8 PM. The gallery is located in the Bergamot Station Art Center, 2525 Michigan Avenue, Building G-5, Santa Monica, CA 90404. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am to 6 PM. For more information, call (310) 264-8440. <http://www.rosegallery.net>.