

FRÆNKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

For immediate release:

LEE FRIEDLANDER **FRAMED**

BY JOEL COEN

May 6–June 24, 2023



I found it a daunting task to choose just a few images from Lee Friedlander's vast career. Where to start...?

—Joel Coen

Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to announce **Lee Friedlander Framed by Joel Coen**, an exhibition of Friedlander's photographs curated by the widely acclaimed filmmaker. Rather than focusing on a single subject or period, Coen's selection concentrates on Friedlander's singular approach to composition. Through the approximately 45 images in the exhibition Coen surveys

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the range of Friedlander’s 60+ year career, bringing many lesser-known images into the equation. The selection evidences an unexpected affinity between Friedlander and Coen, both of whose work explores the sly power of images. A new hardcover publication, with an introduction by Coen and an afterword by the actor Frances McDormand, accompanies the exhibition.

Friedlander, Coen, and McDormand, long admirers of each other’s work, met in the spring of 2022 at Friedlander’s home in Rockland County, New York. During the day-long visit the artists studied hundreds of photographs, ultimately leading to the selection that constitutes the book and exhibition.

I was present when these two guys met for the first time and observed a familiarity that comes from their lifetimes of singular and eccentric visions... Neither would naturally refer to himself as an Artist. Yet they have honed their crafts over decades of practice, and those of us who cannot see the way they see have no other way to describe what they do but “art.”

—from the afterword by Frances McDormand

Coen’s selection focuses on photographs that are dense and off-kilter, often bisected by stop signs and utility poles, car doors and windshields, trees and shadows. “As a filmmaker, I liked the idea of creating a sequence that would highlight Lee’s unusual approach to framing—his splitting, splintering, repeating, fracturing, and reassembling elements into new and impossible compositions,” Coen writes.

Lee Friedlander Framed by Joel Coen will be on view at both Fraenkel Gallery in San Francisco, and in New York at Luhring Augustine (May 13 to June 24). Both exhibitions will be accompanied by a special projection created by Coen, sequencing Friedlander’s images in unexpected and revealing ways. The book that accompanies the exhibition is published by Fraenkel Gallery and includes an expanded selection of 70 works. It will be available on both galleries’ websites.

Fraenkel Gallery will host a public reception with Lee Friedlander and Joel Coen on Saturday, May 6, from 2-4pm. Luhring Augustine will host a reception with both artists in New York on Saturday, May 13.

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Lee Friedlander (born 1934) began photographing in 1948. His work was included in the influential 1967 exhibition *New Documents* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, curated by John Szarkowski, among countless other exhibitions. His more than 50 monographs include *Signs*, *Self-Portrait*, *Cherry Blossom Time in Japan*, *Letters from the People*, *At Work*, and *Sticks and Stones*, among others. One of the most important living photographers, Friedlander's prints are held by major collections including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Whitney Museum of American Art, among many others.

Joel Coen (born 1954) is celebrated as one of the most visionary and idiosyncratic filmmakers of our era. Combining thoughtful eccentricity, wry humor, arch irony, and often brutal violence, the films of Coen (working with his brother Ethan) have become synonymous with a style of filmmaking that pays tribute to classic American movie genres—especially film noir—while sustaining a firmly postmodern sensibility.

Frances McDormand (born 1957) is an acclaimed American actor and producer. McDormand has won numerous accolades including four Academy Awards, two Golden Globe Awards, three BAFTA Awards, two Emmy Awards, and a Tony Award, making her one of the few performers to achieve the "Triple Crown of Acting."

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Image: Lee Friedlander, *Sweden*, 2005

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