



**SMART MUSEUM OF ART**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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*There was a whole collection made: Photography from Lester and Betty Guttman*  
**UNIQUE EXHIBITION SPANNING HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
FROM 19TH CENTURY THRU PRESENT DAY  
ON VIEW AT UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO'S SMART MUSEUM OF ART,  
SEPTEMBER 22–DECEMBER 30, 2016**

(June 28, 2016) An extraordinary collection of 830 photographic works spanning from 1844 to 2012, bequested to the **Smart Museum of Art** at the University of Chicago, forms the basis of an expansive new exhibition, *There was a whole collection made: Photography from Lester and Betty Guttman*, September 22–December 30, 2016. The exhibition of more than 300 works is curated by Laura Letinsky, Professor in the Department of Visual Arts and the College at the University of Chicago, and herself an acclaimed photographer, and Jessica Moss, Smart Museum Curator of Contemporary Art. *There was a whole collection made* officially opens with a free public reception at the Smart Museum, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Wednesday, September 28, 7–8:30pm.

*There was a whole collection made* mines the Estate of Lester and Betty Guttman's 2014 gift of over eight hundred photographic works by 414 artists to the Smart Museum, essentially establishing a major new resource for the public as well as scholars of the history and theory of photography. The exhibition draws extensively from the collection, which the Guttmans built over 31 years, and includes rare vintage prints by pioneers of the medium like William Henry Fox Talbot and David Octavius Hill; modern works by Hannah Höch, Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy, Brassai, Berenice Abbott, and Helen Levitt; contemporary classics by Diane Arbus, Malick Sidibé, Chuck Close, and Carrie Mae Weems; and much more. The exhibition opens with a dramatic salon-style wall of nearly fifty works and afterward is organized into five thematic sections: the natural and built world; photographic experimentation; documentary; portraiture; and "fifteen minutes of fame," which features portraits of famous and not-so-famous people by other famous, and not-so-famous photographers.

“Rather than seeking to collect, for example, all the works of a specific artist, period, or place, or the best known or most precious, Lester and Betty Guttman’s choices grew out of their inquisitiveness and wide-ranging interests in the world,” said exhibition co-curator Laura Letinsky. “The breadth of historical, technological, and conceptual strategies, as well as the variety of subject matter, demonstrate an ongoing curiosity. It is a thoroughly eclectic and a fantastically personal gathering of images expressive of the Guttman’s full, deep lives.”

“This exhibition marks the Smart Museum’s first opportunity to publicly celebrate the Guttman’s inspiring collection and the generosity of their bequest,” added co-curator Jessica Moss. “At the Smart—Lester and Betty’s neighborhood museum—their passion and curiosity will live on as their collection becomes a vital resource not only for teaching and research but also for all to enjoy.”

*There was a whole collection made* will be accompanied by a fully illustrated multi-author catalogue published by the Smart Museum and distributed by the University of Chicago Press.

### **About the Guttman’s**

The Guttman’s were married for 50 years and worked together at Argonne National Laboratory, where Lester Guttman (1919–2006) was a senior scientist and editor of the *Journal of Applied Physics* and Betty Guttman (1922–2014) was a technical librarian. Betty was also an alumna of the University of Chicago (SB 1943) and the couple were longtime Hyde Park residents. While photography was just one of their shared pursuits—they were also patrons of art and music in Chicago and, as amateur mycologists, co-edited the journal *McIlvainea*—they enjoyed the deep pleasure of living with art that one knows well.

### **About the exhibition title**

The exhibition’s title is taken from Gertrude Stein’s *Tender Buttons* (1914); Stein is the subject of several photographs in the Guttman collection.

### **Related programming**

Related public programming—including free tours, photo salons, family days, and workshops—will be announced shortly. More information on *There was a whole collection made* can be found at

<http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/there-was-a-whole-collection-made-photography-from-lester-and-betty-guttman/>

### **Support**

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### **About the Smart Museum of Art**

The Smart Museum of Art offers an intimate environment for bold encounters with art. Both fueling and expressing the creative energy of the University of Chicago, the Smart opens the world to

boundary-breaking art and ideas through innovative special exhibitions, ever-changing programs, and distinctive collections.

### **Hours**

The Smart Museum is open Tuesday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., and Thursday evenings until 8 p.m. Galleries are closed Mondays and holidays. **The Smart is open to all and admission is always free.**

### **Mission**

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago opens the world through art and ideas.

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### **Headline image credits (left to right)**

David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, *Untitled [James (or Sandy) Linton, New Haven Fisherman]*, ca. 1844–45, Salted paper print from a calotype negative. Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Gift of the Estate of Lester and Betty Guttman, 2014.394.

Hannah Höch, *Photomontage*, ca. 1935, Gelatin silver print. Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Gift of the Estate of Lester and Betty Guttman, 2014.400.

Adam Fuss, [*“Sunflower”*] AFN204, 1992, Cibachrome print. Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Gift of the Estate of Lester nad Betty Guttman, 2014.343.