

Foreword

The highest goal of the California Museum of Photography is to promote an integrated understanding of photography and its impact on modern culture. To that end, the CMP produces a wide range of exhibitions, publications, and public programs, and maintains an enormous, and enormously varied, collection of photographic prints, negatives, equipment, and related archives.

But the Museum is nothing if it is not, primarily and essentially, an idea. That idea begins with the premise that a photograph can provide data as useful to the historian as an explorer's diary; it can be as valuable a cultural artifact as a frieze from an ancient tomb.

As a vital part of the University of California, the Museum can serve a special function. Beyond its role as custodian of its own collections, it can help to improve access to the University's vast photographic treasures, and encourage their preservation for future researchers and for the people of this state. The Museum thereby serves its seminal purpose--not the hoarding of piles of paper, glass, and old cameras, but the sharing of our cultural heritage.

In this regard, it is our hope that the work performed by the staff and advisors of this Museum, coordinated so capably by Sheryl Conkelton, will serve as model for what can be done, and as an outline for what is needed.

Charles Desmarais, Director
California Museum of Photography