deCordova announces *The Social Medium*, opening in October 2014

Social photography exhibition features deCordova’s recent gift of Andy Warhol Polaroids

_Lincoln, MA, September 29, 2014_—deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum is pleased to present *The Social Medium*, an exhibition that examines the history of social photography. On view from October 31, 2014–April 19, 2015, *The Social Medium* features work from the mid-twentieth century to the present that encompasses multiple photographic genres including social documentary, street, celebrity, and portrait photography. Presented at a time when the compulsion to digitally document and share human activity has increased exponentially, the exhibition features works from deCordova’s permanent collection that prefigure and inform current trends in social photography, as well as recent work by contemporary artists.

*The Social Medium* was largely inspired by a recent gift of one of Andy Warhol’s _Little Red Books_, which contains a set of color Polaroids. _Little Red Book 128_ was donated to deCordova by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Warhol’s obsession with recording his social activities using Polaroids, which develop in mere seconds, reinforces his reputation as a harbinger of the age of the internet, 24/7 news cycles, and consumer culture that caters to instant gratification. With his Polaroid camera, Warhol documented the events of his life, from glamorous celebrity parties to mundane occurrences. These images were catalogued by the artist into hundreds of small red Holston Polaroid albums, consequently known as _Little Red Books_. The Warhol Foundation’s gift of these photographs, which record Warhol’s artistic and social milieu, created an opportunity to examine the works of other artists who also photograph social experience.

The creation of social photography was first aided by the invention of the portable traditional film camera, followed by the instant Polaroid camera, the digital camera, and most recently the smartphone camera, which has pushed social photography into a primarily ephemeral form. By featuring photographs created by each of these devices over the course of several decades, *The Social Medium* provides a selective history of the camera’s role as an extension of memory and as a tool that is both a witness to and a participant in human social activity. The exhibition showcases a variety of photographic practices and processes, from traditional film developed in a darkroom to digital photography created with an iPhone or shared on social networking sites; together, these works speak to photography’s continued relevance and power to preserve both personal and societal histories.

**Featured Artists**

Artists included in *The Social Medium* are Jules Aarons, Elsa Dorfman, Larry Fink, Charles “Teenie” Harris, Lotte Jacobi, Rodger Kingston, Phillip Maisel, Nicholas Nixon, Tod Papageorge, Bill Ravanesi, Eugene Richards, Michal Ronnen Safdie, Neal Slavin, Greg Schmigel, and Andy Warhol.
Exhibition-related Events

Digital Discussion with Greg Schmigel
November 14, 6:30 pm
The Social Medium artist Greg Schmigel and exhibition curator Samantha Cataldo lead a virtual discussion about Schmigel’s mobile photography and about social media, the phenomenon which, in part, inspired the exhibition. Cataldo moderates the discussion from the galleries, and Schmigel attends via video conference.
Attend in person or participate on Twitter: @decordovaSPandM #TheSocialMedium

Curator Tour
April 15, 2 pm
Join exhibition curator Samantha Cataldo for a tour of The Social Medium.

About deCordova

Established in 1950 and located just 20 miles west of Boston, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum is dedicated to fostering the creation and exploration of contemporary sculpture and art through a dynamic slate of rotating exhibitions, innovative learning opportunities, a constantly changing 30-acre landscape of large-scale, outdoor, modern and contemporary sculpture, and site-specific installations.

General Information

DeCordova is located at 51 Sandy Pond Road in Lincoln, MA. Summer hours (beginning Memorial Day weekend) are every day, 10 am to 5 pm. Winter hours (beginning Columbus Day weekend) are Wednesday–Friday, 10 am to 4 pm, and Saturday–Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm. Admission is $14 for adults, $12 for seniors, $10 for students (ages 13 and up), and free for children 12 and under. Members, Lincoln residents, and active duty military personnel and their families are admitted free of charge with proper ID. Public, private, and self-guided tours of the Sculpture Park and of the Museum are also available. Visit decordova.org or call 781.259.8355 for further information.