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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY ONLY US VENUE FOR
RICHARD AVEDON: FAMILY AFFAIRS

Exhibition featuring more than 70 portraits by the famed photographer opens April 1

The **National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH)** in Philadelphia will be the **only US venue** to feature ***Richard Avedon: Family Affairs***, from the collection of the **Israel Museum, Jerusalem**. The exhibition, which **opens on April 1**, presents a compelling collective historical portrait of American cultural and political life during the late 1960s and 1970s.



Allen Ginsberg's Family, Paterson, New Jersey, May 3 1970.
Photograph by Richard Avedon, © Richard Avedon Foundation. Gift of the American Contemporary Art Foundation, Leonard A. Lauder, President, to American Friends of the Israel Museum.

Richard Avedon was born to a Jewish family (his father was a Russian-born

immigrant and his mother from New York) in 1923. Working until his death in 2004, he shaped America's image of beauty, celebrity, and politics for over a half century.

Famous at an early age, he was well-known for challenging conventions and exploring the boundaries between high art and social commentary. ***Family Affairs*** features two monumental projects by Avedon, both illustrating his highly innovative approach to

portrait photography. The first is a set of four group portraits, including a **massive mural of the iconic beat poet Allen Ginsberg and his family** and three additional portraits shown at a smaller scale — **Andy Warhol and Members of the Factory**, **The Chicago Seven**, and **The Mission Council**. The second is a series of 69 portraits entitled “**The Family**” that **Avedon created after being commissioned by *Rolling Stone*** to cover the 1976 presidential election. Foregoing traditional photojournalism for the assignment, Avedon used his Deardorff 8 x 10” camera to create arresting black and white portraits of each of his subjects. Avedon created a visual essay on the nature of American politics at the moment when it was most conspicuous. Though his “family members” have no biological ties (with the exception of Ted and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy), they are alike in that they all hold positions of power and influence. “The Family” includes the ’76 presidential candidates (**Jimmy Carter** and **Gerald Ford**); **A.M. Rosenthal**, managing editor of the *New York Times*, famous for publishing the Pentagon Papers; and **W. Mark Felt**, later revealed to be “Deep Throat.” Avedon’s subjects also included others at the epicenter of the events and movements of the time (and some who still are today)—including governors, senators, congressmen/women, and a wide swath of varied government officials (**Bella Abzug**, **Jerry Brown**, **George H.W. Bush**, **Barbara Jordan**, **Edward Kennedy**, **Henry Kissinger**, **Daniel Moynihan**, and **Donald Rumsfeld**, to name a few), media moguls and journalists (**Katharine Graham**, **I.F. Stone**), labor leaders/activists (**Cesar Chavez**, **Ralph Nader**, **A Philip Randolph**), philanthropists (**Walter Annenberg**), and many more.

“We are thrilled to be showing *Richard Avedon: Family Affairs* at NMAJH,” says Dr. Josh Perelman, chief curator and director of exhibitions and collections at NMAJH. “*Family Affairs* documents a time of extraordinary political and social change in American history by one of the most significant photographers working in the second half of the 20th century. ‘The Family’ component of the exhibition, given its focus on political power in the days leading up to the 1976 election, seems particularly well-suited for exhibition in Philadelphia, the country’s epicenter for the bicentennial celebrations. And as the country prepares for a presidential election in 2016, the portraits evoke comparisons between the nature of political leadership then and now.”

To allow visitors to see “The Family” as it was originally published, NMAJH will provide multiple original copies of the *Rolling Stone* issue for visitors to flip through, as well as an electronic version that will be delivered via touchscreen. In addition, the Museum will install a photo booth in the middle of the exhibition where visitors can create their own portraits and share them via social media, encouraging them to ponder the meaning of “portrait photography” in the age of the selfie, while creating a visual representation of NMAJH’s own family of visitors. Complementing the exhibition will be a full slate of education and public programs, including themed tours, a special family guide, a class about the intersection of photography and Jewish identity, and much more. The full schedule of related programs will be announced in early spring.

***Richard Avedon: Family Affairs* is based on 2014 exhibition organized by The Israel Museum, Jerusalem and features works from its collection.** The Museum is also grateful to the Gagosian Gallery and the Avedon Foundation for their cooperation. Special thanks to the Avedon Foundation for loaning additional works to the exhibition.

Major support for *Richard Avedon: Family Affairs* has been provided by The Director’s Fund and Lynne and Harold Honickman.

Additional support has been provided by Macy’s, The Abstraction Fund, Annette Y. and Jack M. Friedland, the Consulate General of Israel to the Mid-Atlantic Region, and Gwen and Alan Goodman.

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About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.

About the Israel Museum

The Israel Museum is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel and is ranked among the world’s leading art and archaeology museums. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections, including works dating from prehistory to the present day, in its Archaeology, Fine Arts, and Jewish Art and Life Wings, and features the most extensive holdings of biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world.

The Museum is celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout 2015, with a year-long program devoted to an exploration of Israel’s aesthetic culture in the 50 years before and after its founding.