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DEBORAH BELL
PHOTOGRAPHS

**AUGUST SANDER: PRINTS FOR THE
APERTURE MONOGRAPH
PRINTED BY HIS SON GUNTHER SANDER
September 15-October 31, 2015**

Deborah Bell Photographs is pleased to inaugurate the fall season with the exhibition *August Sander: Prints from the Aperture Monograph, Printed by His Son Gunther Sander*. The exhibition will be on view from September 15th through October 31st. This exhibition presents prints by the photographer's son, Gunther Sander (d. 1987), of the 43 images dating from the 1910s to the early 1950s that appear in the monograph published by Aperture in 1977 as part of The Aperture History of Photography Series. The whereabouts of the majority of the prints reproduced in the book had been unknown since the late 1970s until their reappearance in a private collection earlier this year.

August Sander (German, 1876-1964) was one of the greatest and most influential photographers of the 20th century. He is internationally renowned for his monumental and ambitious project of creating a typological "total picture" of German society, now known as *People of the 20th Century*. As early as 1911 Sander conceived of his intention to make what he described as "a physiognomic portrait of an age," but the National Socialists intervened in 1936 to thwart his progress by destroying the printing plates and all remaining copies of his first book, *Antlitz der Zeit* [Face of Our Time] (1929). Sander continued work on his project until his death in 1964. The intended seven-volume publication, *People of the 20th Century*, was finally realized by the August Sander Archive, Cologne, in 2002 and comprises 619 portraits.

Early in his career as a portrait photographer, Sander rejected his painterly gum-bichromate prints in favor of the clarity and honesty of the unretouched gelatin-silver print. His guiding credo, to "look, observe and think," led him "to see things as they are and not as they should or might be." His direct approach to sitters resulted in unsentimental portraits, a radical approach at a time when pictorialism was still a popular aesthetic. John von Hartz explains Sander's sense of purpose in his insightful essay for the Aperture monograph: "... [Sander] searched for the archetype, the person who fulfilled a role in society yet remained an individual human being. To indicate the universal scope of his project, he never listed the name of a subject; the only identification is the occupation or activity of the person."

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Aperture's slim, white, hardcover book, measuring 8-1/4" (21 cm) square, was simply titled *August Sander* and was the seventh monograph in The Aperture History of Photography Series. It was the first book of August Sander's photographs to be printed and published in the United States by an American publisher. It has not been reprinted since its release in 1977, but continues to be recognized as a key volume on Sander. Although numerous books of Sander's photographs have been published subsequently, two images chosen for the Aperture monograph have not appeared in any other book of his work before or since.

Aperture has been a force of tremendous significance in the field of photography since its founding in 1952 by photographers. Aperture's History of Photography Series distinguished itself in the 1970s, a very important decade during which the work of acknowledged masters, many of whom were still alive at the time, was being rediscovered and introduced to a wider audience. The series was produced under the artistic direction of Robert Delpire, with Aperture's Editor/Publisher Michael E. Hoffman and Managing Editor Carole Kismaric. Their roles in producing Aperture's progressive series of books were crucial in developing serious, widespread attention to the history of photography. This union of now-legendary editors and contributors to the series is a portrait in itself of this early period in the photography market and in photo-book publishing.

August Sander's enormous impact on contemporary photography cannot be overstated. It can be seen in the work of the German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher and their students Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, Thomas Ruff, and Thomas Struth, and in the photographs of Judith Joy Ross and Rineke Dijkstra, all of whom, among countless other photographers, cite Sander's influence on the direction of their work. Sander's detailed concept of presenting what von Hartz describes as "a social structure of his time in the form of portraits" continues to inspire photographers who also seek to achieve an incisive picture of the age and times in which we live.

August Sander: Prints for the Aperture Monograph, Printed by His Son Gunther Sander will be on view from Tuesday, September 15th through Saturday, October 31st. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 11-6. Please contact Kat McElroy, Director, for further information and high-res scans at info@deborahbellphotographs.com or by phone at 212-249-9400

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