

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Presents *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy*

The impact of Hungarian American artists on 20th-century photography explored in VMFA's new exhibition



Martinique, 1972, printed 1970, André Kertész (Kertész Andor) (American, born Hungary, 1894–1985), gelatin silver print, 16 5/8 x 20 5/8 x 1 1/2 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2018.206

Richmond, VA — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) is excited to announce its upcoming exhibition, *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy*, on view at the museum from Oct. 5, 2024, to Jan. 26, 2025. The exhibition will fill a missing chapter in art history and is slated to be the most comprehensive exhibition to examine the geographical reach and extensive influence that Hungarian American photographers have had on 20th-century photography.

[*American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy*](#) is organized for VMFA and curated by the museum's Director and CEO Alex Nyerges. The exhibition, which is co-curated by Károly Kincses, founding director of the Hungarian Museum of Photography, debuted at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary.

American, born Hungary features more than 170 works and related ephemera from 33 photographers. “The photography of Americans born in Hungary is an important, but very under-told, story,” Nyerges said. “As one of the country’s top 10 comprehensive art museums, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is positioned, and even called upon, to help lead the way in telling it.”

Hungarian American artists transformed modern photography in the U.S. Some introduced radical, experimental photographic techniques while others brought with them innovative approaches to photojournalism, advertising and fashion photography. Their encounters with different facets of American life further shaped their approaches to the medium, ultimately leading them to contribute in robust ways to modern photography.

The wealth of intellectual and artistic talent that departed Hungary between the end of World War I and the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 is almost unprecedented in size and effect. This historic emigration included legendary symphony conductors George Szell and Eugene Ormandy, composer Béla Bartók, award-winning film directors Michael Curtiz and Alexander Korda and world-renowned architects and designers Marcel Breuer and László Moholy-Nagy, who is also a featured photographer in the exhibition.

Included in *American, born Hungary* are works by notable photographers such as André Kertész (Kertész Andor), Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton), Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós) and György Kepes, along with less familiar names whose photos are instantly recognizable. Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő), for example, was a pioneer of modern photojournalism whose photos of Omaha Beach on D-Day are among the most renowned images of World War II.

The exhibition examines Hungarian photographers working during the period of political turmoil in their home country during the early 20th century, before the photographers began their emigration to European capitals such as Paris, where surrealism evolved in the 1930s; Berlin, where modernism flourished; and in Dessau, Germany, where the utopian Bauhaus art school was a haven for the post-World War I avant-garde.

The focus of *American, born Hungary*, however, is the impact of Hungarian-born artists on photography in the United States, especially in urban centers such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Through stunning images, the exhibition shows the profound impact of this group of photographers who explored their new country with sensitivity, rigor and insight.

Highlights include works by tailor and photographer John Albok (Albók János), whose scenes of leisure in Central Park and the 1939–40 New York World’s Fair received critical acclaim; Moholy-Nagy, whose “New Bauhaus” sought to establish the Windy City as a design incubator; André de Dienes, whose portraits of cinema’s icons, including Marilyn Monroe, helped fuel Hollywood’s Golden Age; and photojournalists, such as László Kondor, who documented the Vietnam War and social injustice in America.

For more information about *American, born Hungary* at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, visit www.VMFA.museum.



Marilyn Monroe, ca. 1949, André de Dienes (American, born Hungary, 1913–1985), gelatin silver print, 30 5/8 x 24 5/8 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2021.598, Photograph © Andre De Dienes/MUUS Collection



Lexington Avenue at 44th Street, New York, 1937, printed later, André Kertész (Kertész Andor) (American, born Hungary, 1894–1985), gelatin silver print, 20 5/8 x 16 5/8 x 1 1/2 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Judy Haselton, 2018.472

Two Photography Exhibitions. One Ticket.

One ticket will enable visitors to see the two unique exhibitions, *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy* and *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845*. Combined tickets are available for purchase at www.VMFA.museum: \$12 adults, \$10 for seniors 65+, and \$8 for youth 7–17 and college students with ID. Museums for All participants can purchase combined tickets to these two special exhibitions at the reduced price of \$2 each with a limit of four tickets per Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. Combined tickets to the two exhibitions are free for VMFA members and children ages 6 and under. As a participant of Blue Star Museums, VMFA also provides free tickets for all active duty, National Guard and Reserve military personnel and their immediate families.

Exhibition-Related Programs

VMFA will offer a variety of exhibition-related public events, programs and classes for all ages, including lectures, photography workshops and film screenings. An opening talk by exhibition curator Alex Nyerges is planned for Oct. 6, 2024. The complete list of public events and programs can be found at www.VMFA.museum.

Exhibition Catalogue

The exhibition catalogue, *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy*, is published by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and distributed by Yale University Press. The 360-page catalogue features more than 170 photographic images and includes essays by Alex Nyerges and Karoly Kincses, as well as a foreword by Robert Gurbo, curator of the André Kertész Estate. *American, born Hungary* will be available to purchase in the [VMFA Shop](#) and online from Yale University Press.

Featured Photographers

Photographic works by these artists are featured in the exhibition *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy*: Lucien Aigner (Aigner László), John Albok (Albók János), Anna Barna, Ferenc Berko, Cornell Capa (Freidmann Kornell), Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő), Helene Deutch, Stephen Deutch, André de Dienes, Orshi Drozdik, Arnold Eagle, Jolán Gross-Bettelheim, Francis Haar (Haár Ferenc), Nicholas Ház, Béla Kalman, György Kepes, André Kertész (Kertész Andor), Ylla (Camilla Koffler), László Kondor, Balthazar Korab, György Lőrinczy, László Moholy-Nagy, Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton), Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós), Marion Palfi, Sylvia Plachy, Emeri P. Révész-Biró (Révész Imre, Biró Irma), Michael Simon (Simon Mihály), Cornel Somogy, Marcel Sternberger, Max Thorek (Torok Maximilian), László Josef Willinger and Paula Wright (Weisz Paula).

Exhibition Sponsors

American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy will be sponsored in Virginia by the Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Exhibition Endowment; André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation; Julia Louise Reynolds Fund; Davenport Family Foundation; Elisabeth Shelton Gottwald Fund; Mr. and Mrs. Charles N. Whitaker; Carol Ann Bischoff and Mike Regan; Nancy and Wayne Chasen; Community Foundation for a greater Richmond; Anne and Gus Edwards; Tibby and David Ford; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Garner, Jr.; Dr. and Mrs. William V. Garner; Bertie Heiner; Richard S. Reynolds Foundation; Virginia Sargeant Reynolds Foundation; Michael Schewel and



Boys with U.S. Flag, Midway Park, Chicago, 1968, printed 1995, László Kondor (American, born Hungary, 1940), gelatin silver print, 13 x 19 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2021.83 © 2024 Estate of Laszlo Kondor



Central Park, New York, Winter Reflections, ca. 1960, Paula Wright (Paula Weisz) (American, born Hungary, 1930–2015), gelatin silver print, 20 5/8 x 16 5/8 x 1 1/2 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2020.133

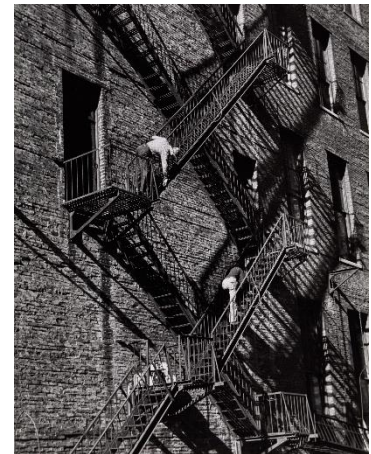
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Traveling Exhibition

Organized by VMFA and curated by the museum’s Director and CEO Alex Nyerges, and by founding Director of the Hungarian Museum of Photography Károly Kincses *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy* first appeared at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary, from April 5 to August 29, 2024. From Oct. 5, 2024, to Jan. 26, 2025, the exhibition will be on view at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Following its run at VMFA, the exhibition will travel to the George Eastman Museum in Rochester, New York, where it will be on view from Sept. 26, 2025, to March 1, 2026.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 6,000 years. VMFA’s permanent holdings encompass nearly 50,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris and one of the nation’s finest collections of American art. VMFA is also home to important collections of Chinese art, English silver, and French Impressionist, Postimpressionist, British sporting and modern and contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin Wing I after a transformative expansion, previously the largest in its history. A new expansion, the McGlothlin Wing II, is planned to open in 2028. Comprising more than 170,000 square feet, it will be the largest expansion in the museum’s history and will make VMFA the fifth largest art museum in the United States.



Fire Escape, New York, 1949, André Kertész (Kertész Andor) (American, born Hungary, 1894–1985), gelatin silver print, 24 5/8 x 20 5/8 x 1 1/2 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2014.174

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone (804) 340-1400 or visit www.VMFA.museum.

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