



## **Museum of the City of New York receives \$96,618 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to process and catalog photographs from the *LOOK* Collection**

(New York, NY | October 2018) - The Museum of the City of New York is honored to announce a \$96,618 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to increase public access to photographs from the *LOOK* Collection through processing, assignment-level cataloging, copyright research, and evaluation. This project is part of an ongoing effort to provide access to the *LOOK* Collection, which includes photographs related to 2,242 stories from 41 different photographers. These photographs were taken between 1938 and 1968, and vividly document the cultural transformation of the nation from World War II through the Cold War era.

Founded in 1937 by Des Moines, Iowa newspaperman Gardner Cowles, *LOOK* magazine used personal stories to narrate the nuanced political, social, and cultural issues of the day. The years during which *LOOK* magazine was most popular with the American public were the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or the “American Century,” when the United States strove to be a dominant force politically, culturally, and economically, following World War II. These photographs serve as both a lens and a prism for viewing the nation during this time period and are essential to understanding how Americans of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century moved within their political, cultural, and physical environments.

The collection primarily exists as film, a format that renders the material nearly inaccessible for researchers and curators alike. As the number of images taken for a single assignment varied from a few dozen to a few hundred, at least 80% of the images in the *LOOK* Collection never reached the publication’s pages. With the generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Museum will process the collection as a unit. Searchable assignment-level catalog records will be added to the Museum’s collections management system, created from existing descriptive assignment worksheets. To better place each photographer’s work in context of the publication’s New York focus, the Museum will also develop an archival finding aid. These products will allow the Museum to strategically prioritize future digitization projects according to both the Museum’s mission and overall significance to the humanities field.

This project has been made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor

### **About the National Endowment for the Humanities**

The National Endowment for the Humanities, established in 1965 aims to promote excellence in the humanities and convey the lessons of history to all Americans. This is accomplished through awarding grants for top-rated proposals examined by panels of independent, external reviewers. For more information visit: <https://www.neh.gov/>

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### **About the Museum of the City of New York**

The Museum celebrates and fosters understanding of the world's most influential metropolis. Through a unique array of content-rich special exhibitions, public and education programs, and publications, the Museum engages visitors by documenting and interpreting the city's past, present, and future. For more information visit: [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org).

The Museum serves the people of New York and visitors from around the world through exhibitions, school and public programs, publications, and collections spanning fashion, art, music, theater, culture, activism, and history. Three floors of exhibitions and a prodigious collection of 750,000 objects, art, and artifacts chronicle New York City's people, places, and events.

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