

For more than 50 years, Robert Adams (born 1937) has made compelling, provocative, and highly influential photographs that show the inherent beauty and fragility of the American landscape — and the inadequacy of our response to it. Working in Colorado, California, and Oregon from the 1960s to the present, he has photographed a wide variety of subjects, including suburban sprawl, strip malls, highways, homes, and stores, as well as nature itself — its rivers and skies, forests and fields, the prairie and ocean. What unites this broad body of work is the almost palpable silence that permeates his art. Adams creates photographs that reveal both the silence that the beauty of nature can instill in us — the quietude born of awe and reverence, hope and redemption — and our own silence in the face of its desecration.

Celebrating a half century of work by this seminal American photographer, this exhibition examines the theme of silence in pictures he made between 1965 and 2015. A sense of the sacred graces these photographs of the American West. Adams transforms what he refers to as “the silence of light”— seen in pristine natural landscapes and in those altered by humans — into pictures that not only capture beauty but also question our silence to its destruction through consumerism, industrialization, and lack of environmental stewardship. Together, the three sections of this exhibition — *The Gift*, *Our Response*, and *Tenancy* — reveal that while Adams’ art is a lament for what has been lost, it is also a paean to what remains and to what can give us hope.

*The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington.*

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All of the works in the exhibition are gelatin silver prints unless otherwise specified.

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