

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ PILGRIMAGE

Annie Leibovitz is best known for inventive, compelling portraits of her contemporaries, but in this exhibition her work takes a new direction. *Pilgrimage* charts the artist's personal journey into her cultural inheritance, documenting the enduring evidence of some two dozen influential figures—writers, artists, scientists, photographers, explorers. Most but not all are Americans, as befits a photographer whose work has helped form this country's sense of itself. Many of her subjects—the Concord writers Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau, for instance—lived in the nineteenth century; others, such as Ansel Adams and Elvis Presley, are closer to us in time. All of them left remarkable legacies along with the physical traces of their lives.

Leibovitz has also revisited classic American scenes, such as Niagara Falls and Yosemite Valley, that speak to a common cultural inheritance. These landscapes might be considered reflections on an American artistic tradition of the sublime, but they are also, along with the interiors and the still lifes, portraits of the artist. They reflect on qualities of character that helped define her own artistic ambitions. The pictures show her at the height of her powers, unfettered by the demands of her career and pondering how photographs, including her own, shape a narrative of history that informs the present.

—ANDY GRUNDBERG, guest curator

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Annie Oakley was born on a farm in Darke County, Ohio. She became a star in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, where she developed a spectacular sharpshooting act. One of her most popular stunts was shooting through the center of a small heart on a card from a distance of about forty feet (actual size of heart: 1 3/16 inches x 1 inch). When she retired, she gave shooting lessons to women. "I have always maintained that outside of heavy, manual labor, anything a man can do a woman can do practically as well," she said. "Certainly, this is true in the use and manipulation of firearms." Her riding boots are in the collection of the Garst County Museum in Greenville, Ohio.

For the last twenty years of his life, Ansel Adams lived in Carmel, California, where he had a state-of-the-art darkroom. Many of the photographs he printed there had been taken years earlier. He had started photographing the Yosemite Valley in northern California when he was a boy. Over the years, he made thousands of pictures there. He thought the valley had restorative powers and he was devoted to preserving it. Adams's pictures are what most people think of when they think of Yosemite.

Emily Dickinson began pressing plant specimens into a herbarium when she was a schoolgirl. She stopped adding to the herbarium when she was about fourteen, but she remained an avid gardener all her life. Her herbarium is now in a vault in the Houghton Library at Harvard.

Austin Dickinson, Emily's brother, lived in a house next door to hers in Amherst, Massachusetts. Austin's house has been kept much the way it was in the mid-nineteenth century. Emily Dickinson's only surviving dress is part of the collection of the Amherst Historical Society. A vitrine of stuffed birds is in the society's Mabel Loomis Todd Parlor.

Marian Anderson wore this concert gown in the mid-1940s, when she was at the height of her fame as a singer. Anderson sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday, 1939, after she had been denied permission to sing at Constitution Hall, which had a "white artists only" policy.

The house of the farmer Jacob Lott was at the center of a line drawn by Union artillery and cavalry on the last day of the battle at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863.

One of the most famous photographs of the Civil War, *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter*, was made by Alexander Gardner at a spot called Devil's Den on the Gettysburg battlefield. It is also one of the most famous examples of a staged war photograph. Gardner moved the body of a dead soldier from a nearby field and set up the picture.

One of the most important Lincoln portrait sessions took place at the Brady Gallery in Washington, D.C., on February 9, 1864. A glass negative of a multiple-lens portrait made that day is in the collection of the National Archives. Lincoln was assassinated a year later.

The gloves that Abraham Lincoln had in his pocket the night he was assassinated are in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois. The hat he was wearing that night is part of the collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

The sculptor Daniel Chester French, who made the seated statue of Lincoln in the memorial, worked in his studio at Chesterwood, in Glendale, Massachusetts. He used his own hands as models for Lincoln's hands. The memorial was dedicated in 1922.

Sigmund Freud fled Austria in 1938. His couch is in the Freud Museum at 20 Maresfield Gardens, London, where he lived the last year of his life. The books in his study in London are arranged just as they had been for decades in his apartment in Vienna.

Darwin was a skilled taxidermist. Most of the specimens he prepared while doing research during the voyage of the *Beagle* around the coast of South America are now in the Natural History Museum at Tring in Hertfordshire, England. After he returned from the *Beagle* expedition, in 1836, Darwin bred and studied pigeons at Down House, his estate in Kent. To compare the skeletons of the various breeds, he collected bodies and boiled them, although the smell and mess in the kitchen became too much for his wife and it was decided that the bodies could be sent out for more professional preparation.

Georgia O'Keeffe's great subject was the desert landscape of New Mexico, where she lived for the last thirty-seven years of her life. She had two houses there. She spent the summer and fall at Ghost Ranch, a dude ranch in the badlands, and the winter and spring in the little town of Abiquiu. A rattlesnake skeleton is under glass on a table at her Abiquiu house. A red hill at Ghost Ranch was the subject of several paintings.

O'Keeffe's homemade pastels are in the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Research Center in Santa Fe. Her bed in Abiquiu faces a large window overlooking the desert. The door in the adobe patio wall is what first attracted O'Keeffe to the Abiquiu house. She painted it many times.

In the 1940s, Georgia O'Keeffe made some of her greatest paintings at what she called the Black Place, a group of barren hills in a remote part of New Mexico, about 150 miles west of her house at Ghost Ranch. She camped out there often, painting and collecting rocks.

The painters Vanessa Bell—Virginia Woolf's sister—and Duncan Grant lived at Charleston Farmhouse in East Sussex in a complicated household. Charleston is the most important remaining example of Bloomsbury decorative style. The Studio was one of the warmest rooms in the house. Duncan Grant painted the panels around the fireplace. Portraits by Grant of Vanessa's sons, Julian and Quentin, hang on the wall of her bedroom.

Virginia and Leonard Woolf lived a few miles from Charleston, at Monks House. Virginia wrote *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando*, *The Waves*, *Between the Acts*, and hundreds of stories, essays, and reviews there. In his memoirs, Leonard recalls Virginia's writing studio as being very messy— "not merely untidy but squalid." Her desk is covered with ink stains.

Virginia Woolf walked along the River Ouse, near Monks House, every day. She drowned there in 1941.

Everyone in Bronson Alcott's family kept a journal. One of the pages of Bronson's journal has an outline of his and his daughter Louisa May's hands. Beth Alcott made the rag doll in the blue dress in the 1850s. Her sister May painted its face. Louisa May gave the doll on the right to May's daughter, Lulu, whom she took care of after May's death. The drawings on the wall of May's bedroom at Orchard House, the Alcott home in Concord, Massachusetts, include a copy May made of an etching she had borrowed from Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Elvis Presley was born in a two-room house that his father had built in Tupelo, Mississippi. The family moved to Memphis, Tennessee, when Elvis was thirteen. When he became successful, he bought Graceland, a limestone mansion with Corinthian columns. Elvis, his parents, and his grandmother are buried in the Meditation Garden at Graceland, on the far side of the swimming pool. The stairs lead to the family's private rooms on the second floor, where Elvis died.

Sometime in the 1970s, Elvis shot out the TV in his house in Palm Springs. It is now in a storage room at Graceland.

The frame and caning of the bed that Henry David Thoreau slept on at Walden Pond were taken from a Chinese sofa bed. Thoreau attached legs to the frame and made a bedstead. In the mid-nineteenth century, Boston served as a port for ships doing trade in Asia. It would not have been unusual to find a piece of furniture from China in nearby towns such as Concord. Thoreau's bed is now in the Concord Museum.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was at the center of the community of nineteenth-century Transcendentalists in Concord. His study has been re-created in the Concord Museum, which is across the street from his house. The hat he wore on his daily walks hangs next to a door in the house. A drawer in a cabinet is part of the re-creation of the study in the museum. Carleton Watkins's photographs of Yosemite and Mount Shasta are on a wall of the Emerson dining room. A painting of Vesuvius erupting is hung in the hallway outside the parlor.

Robert Smithson created the *Spiral Jetty* earthwork in 1970 on the northeastern shore of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. The level of the lake rose shortly after Smithson completed his work, submerging the *Spiral Jetty* for thirty years. It had emerged when these pictures were taken, but it has since become covered with water again.

Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House, the distillation of his ideas about steel-and glass buildings, was constructed as a country retreat on the Fox River, a few miles west of Chicago. The house was built on stilts, which didn't prevent it from being flooded several times.

Starting early in 1864, after her daughter gave her a camera for Christmas, Julia Margaret Cameron made portraits of her friends and family in a little studio in the garden behind her house in Freshwater Bay, at the western end of the Isle of Wight. She sometimes used the garden wall as a background for her pictures. Cameron's lens is now in the National Media Museum in Bradford, England.

Pete Seeger's workroom, Cold Spring, New York. Seeger has lived on a hill above the Hudson River in Cold Spring since 1949. He cleared the land and built a log cabin and raised his family there.

Thomas Jefferson's vegetable garden at Monticello, his home in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia. The gardens at Monticello were a laboratory for Jefferson's ideas about a national economy based on agriculture. He cultivated over fifty varieties of beans. Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on an exploratory journey to the Pacific coast in 1804. The compass they used is in the Smithsonian's Museum of American History.

Martha Graham's studio on East Sixty-third Street in New York City was demolished in 1999, eight years after her death. The iron gates to the studio lean against the back wall of a storage warehouse in Yonkers, next to props from sets designed by Isamu Noguchi.

Val-Kill was Eleanor Roosevelt's home in the Hudson River Valley, in upstate New York. From 1926 to 1936 she and two friends had a furniture factory there. The factory was then turned into a cottage where Eleanor lived and worked until her death in 1962. She often slept in the unheated sleeping porch next to her bedroom, even in cold weather.

During the years that John Muir lived alone in Yosemite (1868-1875), he became the foremost collector of botanical specimens from the valley. Many of the specimens are now at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, California, on the farm where Muir lived after he was married.