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# Reynolda House features works by renowned photographer Ansel Adams

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Front view of Reynolda House.

*Courtesy of Reynolda House.*

The visually stunning and influential work of [Ansel Adams](#) (1902-1984), the best-known and celebrated photographer in American history, is the subject of "[Ansel Adams: Eloquent Light](#)," an exhibition on view through July 17, 2016, exclusively at [Reynolda House Museum of American Art](#) in Winston-Salem, N.C.



Mary Gilbert

Reynolda House, one of the nation's premier American art museums, is the sole venue for this exhibition, organized by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas, from its collection and two private collections in the state. The exhibition showcases approximately 40 of Adams' landmark photographs that have never before been presented together. *"Eloquent Light,"* a title Adams once used himself for an exhibition in the 1960s, is appropriately evocative. As explained in the exhibition's introductory notes, "Inspiring beauty was Adams' ideal. Light was his means."

Adams' vivid, uplifting, and luminous black and white, full-tonal images of the grand American West, especially [Yosemite National Park](#) where his first visit at age 14 proved a transformative experience, helped establish photography as a fine art. A lonely boy, both hyperactive and brilliant, Adams forged his own path through the world through art, according to Phil Archer, Betsy Main Babcock director of program & interpretation at Reynolda House.

"Adams found such a deep, transcendent communion with the West that he spent the rest of his life making these places look the way they

felt to him, and they meant everything to him,” Archer explained.

Adams’ signature style signaled both an appreciation of natural beauty and a strong bent toward environmentalism and wilderness conservation. In addition to serving as an official photographer of the Sierra Club and his long tenure on the organization’s board, the photographer was instrumental in ensuring King’s Canyon in the Sierra Nevada became a national park, preserved as inviolate for future generations.

When awarding Adams the Medal of Freedom in 1980, President Jimmy Carter acknowledged these dual traits, calling him a “monument to the environmental movement as well as an icon to the world of art,” Archer recited.

The exhibition begins with an enlarged rendering of a photo of Adams taken by his friend Cedric Wright in 1942. Adams is standing atop a Pontiac in Yosemite Valley, an indication of the lengths he would go to ensure the proper shot.

Among the famous photographs on display are: *Mount Denali and Wonder Lake, Denali National Park, Alaska, 1948; Vernal Fall, Yosemite Valley, California, 1948; Moonrise Over Hernandez, New Mexico, 1941; Aspens, New Mexico, 1958; and Oak Tree, Snowstorm, Yosemite Valley, California, 1948.*

The appearance of “Eloquent Light” at Reynolda House coincides with the centennial of the National Park Service, which marks its 100th anniversary in Aug. 2016.

“We want visitors to take away the singular vision

of this artist as a definer of the American identity, and see the photos as representative of his whole career,” Archer said. “He made images that reflected the world, and was able to change the world for the good of all, and we want both sides to come out in this exhibition.”

**When you go**

Reynolda House Museum of American Art

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