

**MoMA PUBLISHES RICHARD BENSON'S *THE PRINTED PICTURE*,  
A HISTORY OF THE EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY OF MULTIPLE IMAGES**

**MoMA Will Present an Educational Exhibition Based on the Book from October 17, 2008,  
to May 2009**

**NEW YORK, September 24, 2008**— The ability to make and distribute identical copies of a single picture has played a vital role in human society and culture. *The Printed Picture* (308 pages; 326 color ills; \$60.00, hardcover, October 2008) is a highly original and accessible history of the endlessly evolving technology of multiple images, from the Renaissance woodblock to today's fast-paced digital innovations. Richard Benson, a renowned printer and former Dean of The Yale University School of Art, combines a lifetime of practical experience—on the press, in the darkroom, at the workbench—with a great teacher's talent for making complex subjects simple. Presented as a series of one-page essays opposite the pictures they discuss, the book retains the engaging, informal style of the author's celebrated seminars at Yale.

Benson begins with the principal printing processes—relief, engraving and etching, stencil, and finally lithography, which was invented only a few decades before photography. The announcement of the daguerreotype in 1839 introduced a whole new kind of picture, whose technical evolution spawned a great variety of methods. In the early twentieth century, the long-sought integration of photography with the old ink-on-paper processes made possible the photographically illustrated magazines, newspapers, and books that have done so much to shape the modern world.

At every step Benson's vivid, no-nonsense account of how a particular picture is made is full of implications for what it looks like, how it is used, and the social impact it has had. His sense of humor and his hard-won respect for how difficult it can be to make something well dovetail neatly with his ability to convey his unparalleled expertise without sounding like an expert.

Beginning in the 1970s, photographic printing in offset lithography reached an extraordinary level of quality—a development in which Benson himself played a leading role. By the 1990s, new digital technologies began to radically transform both photography and printing. Because Benson also has been intimately involved in these developments, as both artist and technician, he is just as much at home with the new as with the old.

Peter Galassi, MoMA's Chief Curator of Photography, states: "Never before has the hands-on perspective of a printer and photographer illuminated such a staggering range of techniques for making multiple images. And not since *Prints and Visual Communication* by William H. Ivins

(1953) and *Prints and People* by A. Hyatt Mayor (1971) has a book offered such a rich interpretation of their enormous cultural and social influence."

The book is largely illustrated with material that the author has collected over the past four decades and has now given to The Museum of Modern Art as the basis for a study collection of printing and photographic processes. Supplementing that collection with outstanding works from the Museum's collection, Benson and Galassi have organized a didactic exhibition to accompany the publication of the book, including approximately 60 enlarged details, magnified 50 times to reveal the structure of a broad range of techniques. Also titled *The Printed Picture*, the exhibition will be on view in The Edward Steichen Photography Galleries on the third floor from October 17, 2008, through May 2009.

*The Printed Picture* is published by The Museum of Modern Art and is available at MoMA Stores and online at [www.momastore.org](http://www.momastore.org). It is distributed to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P) in the United States and Canada, and through Thames + Hudson outside North America.

### **About the Author**

**Richard Benson**, a MacArthur Foundation Fellow, revolutionized the standards of reproducing photographs in ink through such noted publications as *The Work of Atget*, *The Face of Lincoln*, *Photographs from the Collection of the Gilman Paper Company*, and more than a dozen books by Lee Friedlander. Benson is the author, as a photographer, of *Lay This Laurel* (with text by Lincoln Kirstein) and, as a writer, of *A Maritime Album* (with photographs selected by John Szarkowski). His photographic work is in many public collections including those of The Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

### **SPONSORSHIP:**

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### ***The Printed Picture***

Richard Benson

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