



Parrish Art Museum Screens “Don’t Blink: Robert Frank” with Filmmaker Talk

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

Photographer Robert Frank takes the spotlight at the Parrish Art Museum on Friday with a documentary screening and talk with film directors. “Don’t Blink: Robert Frank” screens at 6 p.m. on March 31, 2017 followed by a discussion by film director and friend Laura Israel with Alex Bingham, the editor and art director for the film. The pair expects to discuss the relevance of Frank’s outsider view of American society on his work and the making of his book “The Americans.” The talk will also explore the ways the book changed 20th century photography and Frank’s involvement with the Beats, the Rolling Stones and sixties counter-culture.

Born in Switzerland in 1924, Frank was both a photographer and documentary filmmaker. At one point, he was an assistant to photographer Walker Evans and a commercial photographer for *Harper’s Bazaar*. Frank is known for documentary photography rendered in a gritty and non-romanticized style that took an unflinching look at American society in the fifties. His art has been exhibited in museums internationally and may be best known for his 1958 book “The Americans.”

The book, released in France first, generated controversy for both style and subject matter. “[The Americans](#)” featured 83 photographs selected from images Frank made during a series of cross-country road trips in the mid-1950s using a hand-held camera. Made possible by a Guggenheim Fellowship, Frank captured America culture through iconic symbols of cars, parades, jukeboxes, and diners while probing beneath the surface to reveal racism, consumer culture and political malaise that contrasted with presented optimism that prevailed following World War II in America.

“I have long been fascinated by Robert Frank’s work,” stated [Corinne Erni](#), Parrish Curator of Special Projects, in the film screening announcement. “He wasn’t afraid to push the boundaries as a photographer and filmmaker. His work is uncompromising; he cared about the art and the people he photographed, not about fame. His outsider view of American society is more relevant now than ever. I am very excited to present a rare glimpse of his life and work.”

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Robert Frank. Courtesy of the Parrish Art Museum.

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“[Don’t Blink: Robert Frank](#)” provides an in-depth, close-up view of the media-averse and introverted artist by his longtime friend Laura Israel, who will attend the screening and participate in a Q & A

together with the film's editor and art director [Alex Bingham](#).

Israel, who has been working as Frank's editor since the late 1980s, chose to mimic the roaming and creatively restless nature of the photographer's body of work in her film. She structured "Don't Blink" as a back-and-forth journey, traveling through various aspects of Frank's life including "The Americans"; his involvement with the Beats, [Rolling Stones](#), and 1960s counter-culture; his experimental film work; his relationships with his wife June Leaf; and the tragic loss of both of his children.

"I think it reflects Robert's life to have the film unfold and build upon itself," Israel told the Parrish. "The film travels from one scene to the next ... it takes detours back and forth between various subjects—like Robert's own body of work... it forces the viewer to become more involved."

The film also includes vérité footage of Frank at his home in New York, on excursions with the filmmakers, and with his diverse friends. While Frank is known foremost for his work in the realm of photography—especially the manner in which he revolutionized photojournalism with "The Americans"—Israel devotes a significant amount of time to his cinematic works, including "Pull My Daisy" (1959), a collaboration with novelist/poet [Jack Kerouac](#).

About Robert Frank

[Robert Frank](#), born in Zurich in 1924, emigrated to the U. S. in 1947 and worked as a fashion photographer for *Harper's Bazaar*. During that time, he created several hand-bound books of photographs and in 1950 he participated in a group show of American photographers at the [Museum of Modern Art](#), New York. In 1955, Frank secured a Guggenheim Foundation Grant to travel across the United States and take photographs. Because they deviated from accepted photographic standards of that time (Frank's loose, casual approach often generated blurred imagery and tilted horizons) the project was rejected by American publishers. "The Americans" was first published in Paris in 1958; in 1959 it was published stateside by Grove Press.

Frank ultimately turned his sites from photography to filmmaking, creating classics of American subculture including "Pull My Daisy," as well as a documentary of a Rolling Stones tour in 1972 (unreleased). Frank's photography and films have been featured in solo and group exhibitions at the National Gallery and the Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington, DC); Museum of Fine Arts (Houston); Museum Folkwang (Germany); and the Tate Modern (London).

About Laura Israel

Director [Laura Israel](#) began her career as a film editor of award-winning commercials and music videos while still a film student at New York University, forming her own editing company, Assemblage, by the time she graduated. Her client list included John Lurie, [Lou Reed](#), Patti Smith, Keith Richards, Sonic Youth, Ziggy Marley, David Byrne, and artists Laurie Simmons. Robert Frank and others. Films Israel edited with Frank have screened all over the world and have won multiple awards. Her debut documentary "Windfall" premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and won the top prize at Doc NYC.

BASIC FACTS: “Robert Frank: Don’t Blink” will screen at the [Parrish Art Museum](#) on Friday, March 31, 2017 at 6 p.m. Immediately following, a Q&A with Laura Israel and Alex Bingham will be held. The 2015 black and white film has a 82 minute running time. Admission is \$5 for museum members and \$20 for non-members. Includes museum admission. To register, click [here](#). The Parrish Art Museum is located at 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY 11976. www.parrishart.org.

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