

# CORKIN GALLERY

## **Robert Frank**

Swiss, b.1924

Swiss-born Robert Frank, in the late 1950s, was the first foreign photographer to show Americans their own culture. This series of photographs, published in 1958 as a book called *The Americans*, remains a definitive document of that time and place.

In his early years as a photographer, Frank travelled widely in Europe. He photographed in England, chiefly in London, in the early 1950s. His highly atmospheric pictures from this period depict a culture of refinement and elegance. The images, like the society they depict, are beautiful, detailed and textured. Frank's move to the United States correlated with a shift in his photographic style. The new landscape before him changed his vision, and his vision, in turn, reshaped how the nation was perceived. Frank's America was one only a foreigner could see, or have the courage to publicize. These pictures tell a moving story, with interesting and varied characters. In the post-war culture of the nuclear family, Frank photographed a different existence. He was able to recognize and bring to light the existing American culture and capture the spirit of the country in an unprecedented fashion.

Frank relocated to the coast of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia with his partner, artist June Leaf. He has continued to accept eclectic assignments, however, such as photographing the 1984 Democratic National Convention, and directing music videos for artists such as New Order and Patti Smith. Frank continues to produce both films and still images, and has helped organize several retrospectives of his art. His photographs are in permanent collections of museums worldwide including a significant body of work in the National Gallery of Canada.