**JAMES MARTIN**

***Executive Director, The Richard Avedon Foundation***

The collection of Richard Avedon photographs at the Center for Creative Photography represents the best work of the photographer. These prints range from his earliest photographs, taken at the dawn of post-war Europe, to the last portraits he ever made. The 444 prints that comprise this gift read as a cultural zeitgeist of the last half of the twentieth century. From artists to activists, comedians to the uncelebrated, fascists to fashion models, musicians to murderers, socialites to the formally enslaved: these images represent the cultural touchstones that created the visual landscapes we inhabit today. These photographs are a union of Avedon’s conceptual rigor and the rigidity of his craftsmanship. Every piece was constructed with the same exacting attention to detail. Each print, permeated with the weight of its relevance to the larger society, was created with the precision of quality of tone and sharpness of grain that defined the best of photography.

Richard Avedon was determined to place his legacy in an institution that would mirror the seriousness he brought to his photography. He found that the Center was completely aligned in this endeavor. In March 1989, he selected a majority of what he believed to be his most important works, loaded them onto a semi-truck parked outside his studio, and sent his oeuvre to the deserts of the Southwest, thereby creating the single largest archive of his master prints held by any institution.

The Center for Creative Photography is more than a repository of photographs. It is more than an archive of the objects and artifacts that make up the foundation of the medium. It reflects the values and vices of artists who recorded the events of their histories. Richard Avedon’s gift of the best of his work to the Center is a tacit agreement that his legacy would be bound to an institution committed to preserving and promoting the photographic arts.

The Richard Avedon Foundation is grateful and proud that the Center is celebrating Avedon’s gift and showcasing the breadth of this significant body of work.

Milano, 20 September 2022