

# Historically Significant Collection of Dorothea Lange Portraits to be sold by The Berding Trust

*Berding Family Announces Availability of Family Collection of 71 portraits by Dorothea Lange, 1921 - 1931*

FERNDALE, CA, UNITED STATES, October 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Berding Trust, a small

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*Michael Gardner, Berding Trust board member.*

California based family foundation, today announced the prospective sale of an historic collection of portraits taken by the photographer Dorothea Lange. The collection is extraordinary as a preserved archive of Lange’s work, and there are no known comparable collections.

This notable set of 70 photographs, spanning the years 1919 to 1932, offers Lange’s personal observations of a close friend’s children growing from infants to young adults. It also offers a glimpse into Lange’s aesthetic

evolution from portrait to documentary photography. Overall the collection showcases her masterful and unique ability to engage with and create a trustful rapport with subjects, allowing her to capture their humanity.

“In my experience, this rare family record is an historically significant body of work” said Russ Anderson, a photography and fine art dealer who is handling the sale of the collection. “Lange often spoke of the importance of intimacy in the making of a portrait and this highly personal collection of stylistically diverse images of the Clausen family, made over a period of 13 years, illuminates the enduring affection Dorothea felt for Gertrude Clausen and her daughters.”

The photos document the family of Gertrude Clausen, a San Francisco woman who in 1917 married a dairy rancher living in a small village in California’s remote Humboldt County, where she subsequently had five daughters. Clausen maintained her ties to San Francisco and starting in 1919 commissioned Lange to take annual portraits of her children and the family. Lange had just recently moved to San Francisco and set up her portrait studio there.

The collection contains many intimate portraits of the children as infants in 1919 through to

young adulthood in 1932 during the ravages of the Great Depression. The photos in these years evidence the evolution of Lange's style and skills during a period her husband, the painter Maynard Dixon, was also refining his style to adopt concepts of Modernist painting. The final sequence of photos was taken in 1932 on the ranch in Humboldt County, and shows some of the approaches that Lange would soon put to famous effect in photos such as "White Angel Bread Line" (1933) and "Migrant Mother" (1936). The collection also contains multiple prints of some of the images, which affords a rare opportunity to see and compare Lange's darkroom techniques first hand.

Over the years Clausen and Lange developed a close personal friendship, and the children in these photographs as adults became personal friends of Lange's as well. One of the daughters, Christina, was an assistant to Lange during her field work photographing life around the shipyards in Richmond, CA during World War II, and at Manzanar, CA during the imprisonment there of Japanese Americans.

"These portraits by Dorothea Lange are more than just family keepsakes. Lange captured a sense of optimism and hope along with the essence of the personalities in our family," said Michael Gardner, a board member on the Berding trust. "It's fascinating to see this early side of her work made before her more well known Depression-era photography. Parting with these pieces is a difficult decision, but we believe they hold historical value and should be shared outside the family. They offer both a glimpse into the lives of ordinary people during a specific moment in time, and a glimpse into the career and evolution of Dorothea Lange."

Other photos from the collection are visible at <https://www.russarts.com/artistfolios/dorothea-lange>

The collection is offered through Russ Anderson Fine Arts, a dealer in fine photographs, located in Soquel, California, (831) 476-6088. [www.russarts.com](http://www.russarts.com)

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Gertrude and Virginia Clausen, 1928;  
photograph by Dorothea Lange

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