

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Myhren Gallery premieres work of Soviet photographer *“On the Road: Photography of the Soviet Empire” explores the Communist Empire through the work of Soviet Jewish Photographer Semyon Fridlyand*

DENVER— The Victoria H. Myhren Gallery at the University of Denver is pleased to announce its upcoming March 2008 exhibition: *“On the Road: Photography of the Soviet Empire.”* *“On the Road”* is co-curated by Dan Jacobs, director of the Myhren Gallery, and David Shneer, director of the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Denver. The exhibition will comprise approximately 70 images drawn primarily from the archive of Soviet-era photographer Semyon Fridlyand (1906–1964). Exhibition dates are March 6, 2008–May 4, 2008. The exhibition opens with a public reception, Thursday, March 6, 5–8 p.m.

“On the Road: Photography of the Soviet Empire” is supported through the generosity of Russ and Cathy Dalbey and the Dalbey Education Institute. This premiere exhibition of images from the Fridlyand Archive will be accompanied by a catalog containing more than 50 black and white and color images, edited and written by Shneer and Jacobs, and an online repository containing the Fridlyand images and metadata hosted by the University. *“On the Road”* is a joint project of the Victoria H. Myhren Gallery and the Center for Judaic Studies, University of Denver.

Vladimir Lenin said that the camera, more than the gun, was the most important weapon the Communist Revolution had at its fingertips. Fridlyand, an idealistic young Jewish photographer who later became photo editor of *Ogonyok* (the Soviet Union’s version of *Life* magazine) as well as one of the country’s most important photojournalists, built his career documenting the emergence of Soviet society. Compared to contemporaries such as Georgi Zelma, Max Alpert, or Alexander Rodchenko, Fridlyand is little-known in the West. His archive remained with his family in Moscow for four decades until it came to the United States in 2005. It is now housed at the University of Denver, which is mounting the first major exhibition dedicated to this central figure of 20th century photojournalism. The exhibition will include additional images by some of Fridlyand’s contemporaries.

In the emerging USSR, photographers were dispatched to document and glorify everyday life. During his 40-year career, Fridlyand photographed every major theme in official Soviet history, from industrialization and collectivization, to the building of a Soviet empire stretching from the Pacific to the Baltic, and from the Arctic to the Black Sea. Fridlyand also covered the battlefields of WWII, the subject of David Shneer’s forthcoming book *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust*, to be published in 2009.

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