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PRESS RELEASE

April 5, 2007

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Receives \$2.5 Million Gift from Herb Ritts Foundation:

First MFA Gallery Exclusively for Photography to be named in Ritts' Honor

BOSTON, Mass. (April 5, 2007)—The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) announced that the Herb Ritts Foundation has given \$2.5 million to its Campaign, Building the New MFA. In honor of this gift, the MFA will create the Herb Ritts Gallery for Photography—the first gallery devoted exclusively to photography in Museum history. Additionally, the Herb Ritts Foundation, based in Los Angeles, California, is giving 189 Herb Ritts photographs to the Museum, adding to the gift of 45 works that photographer Herb Ritts made to the MFA in 2000. With this gift, the MFA will have one of every print from the exhibition, *Herb Ritts: Work*, in its collection. *Herb Ritts: Work*, the first full-scale retrospective of Ritts' iconic photographs organized by and on view at the Museum in 1996/1997, was one of the ten most highly attended exhibitions in the MFA's history. The collection of 234 photographs includes portraits of some of the most famous people of our time: Roy Lichtenstein, Dustin Hoffman, Nelson Mandela, William Burroughs and Madonna; eternal images of Africa and its people; seductive layouts from the world of fashion; and pure, sensuous studies of the human form. To date, the MFA has raised \$363 million of its \$500 million campaign goal for its Building Project.

"We are honored to name a photography gallery in honor of Herb Ritts. His unforgettable images evoke a world without boundaries of age, race, class or sexuality and they reflect the values of a new generation," said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the MFA.

The Herb Ritts Gallery of Photography will be located in what is now the Museum's Sharf Information Center, near the West Wing, which will be devoted to Contemporary and 20th Century art. The gallery, which is part of the Museum's expansion, will house rotating exhibitions of renowned photographers from the 19th century to the present.

The Museum possesses one of the earliest and historically important collections of photography in the country. This collection began with a gift in 1924 from Alfred Stieglitz, who donated 27 of his photographs. This donation was complemented by additional gifts by Stieglitz's widow, Georgia O'Keeffe, in 1950. Today, through purchases and gifts, the collection encompasses nearly 5,000 works that span the entire history of European and American photography, from the 1840s to the present.

Highlights of gifts from recent years in the area of photography range from gifts of photographs to the endowment of curatorial positions. In 2002, Sandra B. Lane gave the Museum photographs by Ansel Adams, Charles Sheeler, Edward Weston, and Imogen Cunningham. Lane has also supported the purchase of photographs for the Museum, including enabling the MFA to buy 78 works by Josef Sudek. Additionally, in 2001, Lane created an endowment fund for the Curator of The Lane Collection, a position held by Karen Haas; and in 2005 she established the Sandra B. Lane Associate Conservator for Works on Paper, a position held by Katrina Newbury.

Estrellita Karsh, along with her late husband Yousuf Karsh, gave the MFA 196 photographs by the internationally-renowned artist between 1996 and 1998. The collection of predominantly black and white portraits spans more than 60 years of Karsh's career. Karsh photographed the most famous faces of a generation including Winston Churchill, Georgia O'Keeffe, Audrey Hepburn and Ernest Hemingway. The Karshs established the Karsh Prize for Photography at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1999, and the annual Lecture on Photography in 1997. In 2005, Estrellita Karsh also endowed the Estrellita and Yousuf Karsh Curator of Photographs, a post held by Anne Havinga.

The Museum has also received support from James Krebs, who established the James N. Krebs Purchase Fund for 21st Century Photography and made a promised gift of the well known Brown Sisters photography series by noted photographer Nicholas Nixon. The gift includes 32 portraits of the Brown Sisters taken from 1975 to 2006.

These generous donors are continuing the tradition of increasing the appreciation for the art of photography and expanding the Museum's renowned collection. Through their efforts, the collection of photography will continue to grow and now, with the gift from the Herb Ritts Foundation, the MFA has a gallery that will be dedicated to this area of work.