

# LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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## Lee Friedlander: Little Screens April 23 – May 24, 2020

Lee Friedlander is an American master of photography who has devoted himself to documenting what he calls “the social landscape” of this country. He traveled extensively from city to city for decades, casting his sharp eye for mordant wit and startling juxtapositions everywhere he went. This itinerant working method led to an enormous amount of time spent in hotel rooms and other temporary residences. In the 1960s, televisions had arrived as a staple in these types of lodgings, and one could be found in every room. Friedlander’s extensive catalogue of images that feature television screens is emblematic of his approach to image-making, rooted in the layering of forms and the revelation of pictures that occur within a picture.

Within the context of our current moment, the poetic irony of these photographs takes on a new meaning. At the time these photographs were made, the dramatic changes in society that the new technology of the television screen provided was extraordinary, and its subsequent ubiquity changed the nature of social interaction as well as the dissemination of information. Today, we use a whole host of different “little screens” - computers, tablets, smart phones, and even smart watches, which have continued the transformation of exchanges between people that televisions introduced. The onset of the COVID-19 and resulting global response has drastically altered our way of life, and we are collectively adjusting to new modes of interacting at a “social distance”, in which our primary method of connection with others is, at least for the moment, through a screen. Friedlander’s remarkably prescient images remain as thought-provoking and socially conscious now as they were in the 1960s.

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