



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **New Media Consortium Launches First Museum Exhibition in Virtual 3-D World**

George Eastman House's *Seeing Ourselves* can be viewed  
in both real and virtual gallery spaces

George Eastman House, the Electric Sheep Company (ESC), and the New Media Consortium (NMC), with assistance from the Lab for Technological Literacy at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), announced today the of a first-of-its-kind photographic exhibition, in the virtual 3-D world, titled *Seeing Ourselves: American Faces*. The exhibition appears on both the public and the members-only versions of the NMC's campus in Second Life, a massive multi-player online virtual world. This virtual exhibition parallels the photography exhibition *Seeing Ourselves* created by George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, N.Y. — the world's oldest photography museum. This is the first endeavor to hang an exhibition in virtual space that is also being displayed in reality by a museum.

"George Eastman House's iconic photographs will travel to the four corners of the country beginning in 2007, as the *Seeing Ourselves* exhibition embarks upon a national tour," said Dr. Anthony Bannon, director of George Eastman House. "However, the world can enjoy a sample of these historic images now, through the virtual world of Second Life. This is a new day and a new way for sharing photographs." The *Seeing Ourselves* exhibition and tour were made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, to showcase masterpieces by American photographers from the Eastman House collection to audiences in small and mid-sized communities. The exhibition will illustrate the power and significance of photography in American life.

"The *Seeing Ourselves* exhibition provides a unique take on Americana and our shared history, and showcasing it in this way extends it to an entirely new audience," said Dr. Larry Johnson, CEO of the New Media Consortium. "This collaboration, the first of its kind, is unusual in that the photographs in this virtual exhibition have been carefully chosen expressly to compliment the actual exhibition that launched at the Eastman House and will soon be touring the country. The juxtaposition of some of these early photographs with the virtual architecture of the Aho Museum in Second Life adds an interesting element to an already deeply engaging exhibition."

The survey exhibition from the George Eastman House photography collection features the work of such notables as Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange and Mathew Brady, as well as other powerful images of American faces. Like the collection as a whole, it ranges from daguerreotype to digital, and from great works of art to objects of utility,

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history, and memory. The exhibition is currently housed in the NMC's Aho Gallery, an experimental museum space integrated into the campus.

Stephen Jacobs, director of the Lab for Technological Literacy at RIT, noted that "George Eastman House is a world-renowned museum of photography. This virtual exhibit showcases the different ways in which photographs can be used and displayed in the digital age."

The exhibition is taking place in three online venues simultaneously. The public can tour the virtual exhibit on the sim "Learning" within Second Life (<http://slurl.com/secondlife/learning/72/128/26/>). Second Life currently has more than 360,000 residents (players). Photographs and descriptions of the NMC's Aho Museum exhibition can be found on the *NMC Campus Observer* blog ([www.nmc.org/sl](http://www.nmc.org/sl)). Downloadable images of the entire exhibition can be found on *Flickr* at [www.flickr.com/photos/doradora](http://www.flickr.com/photos/doradora), where visitors can also comment on the images themselves or the experience of seeing the images in multiple venues and contexts.

"The Eastman House exhibit within Second Life is a tremendously exciting first step in creating a new way for the public to interact with museums and their collections," said Giff Constable, vice president for Business Development at ESC. "Visitors can visit a virtual museum from anywhere in the world, and experience artwork in an immersive environment far richer than what you can see or accomplish on the Web."

**Attention Media:** High resolution photographs from *American Faces* as well as an image from the related Second Life Gallery can be found at <ftp://ftp.geh.org/pressroom>.

### **About the NMC**

*The New Media Consortium (NMC) is an international 501(c)3 not-for-profit consortium of more than 200 leading colleges, universities, research centers, and museums dedicated to the exploration and use of new media and new technologies. The consortium serves as a catalyst for the development of new applications of technology to support learning and creative expression, and sponsors programs and activities designed to stimulate innovation, encourage collaboration, and stimulate dialog and understanding through the exploration of promising ideas, technologies, and applications. For more information on the NMC, see its web site at [www.nmc.org](http://www.nmc.org).*

### **About George Eastman House**

*George Eastman House is the world's oldest photography museum, founded in 1947 on the estate of Kodak founder George Eastman. The museum has unparalleled collections of 400,000 photographs from 14,000 photographers dating from the beginnings of the medium (including the largest collection of daguerreotypes outside of France); 16,000 items of cameras technology; 26,000 motion picture titles and 3.5 million publicity stills and posters; and one of the world's most comprehensive library of photographic books,*

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*manuscripts, and journals. In modern archives adjacent to the National Historic Landmark home, the museum offers world-leading graduate and post-graduate programs in photograph and film preservation. For more information, visit [www.eastmanhouse.org](http://www.eastmanhouse.org).*

**About Electric Sheep Company**

*The Electric Sheep Company helps people and organizations use virtual worlds more effectively. Our services team works with companies and non-profits to design and implement initiatives in marketing, community management, education, simulation, live events and more. Our software team creates e-commerce and social applications that enrich virtual world spaces. For more information, visit [www.electricsheepcompany.com](http://www.electricsheepcompany.com).*

**About RIT's Lab for Technological Literacy**

*The Lab for Technological Literacy within RIT's Center for Advancing the Study of Cyberinfrastructure aims to investigate, expand, and demonstrate approaches to improve technological literacy through informal science and technology education programs and resources. These include museums, the media and the web. For more information, visit [www.lac.rit.edu](http://www.lac.rit.edu).*

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