

**An American Beauty: Grateful Dead 1965–1995**

June 23 – August 7, 2026

New York

Press Release

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present *An American Beauty: Grateful Dead 1965–1995*, an exhibition of photographs of the iconic band curated by Ricki and Jay Blakesberg. The show follows a major 2025 publication of the same name. The exhibition is on view in New York at 520 W. 20th St. from June 23 through August 7, 2026. An opening reception will be held on Tuesday, June 23, from 6 – 8 PM.

*An American Beauty: Grateful Dead 1965–1995* features twenty-one large-scale and more than two dozen smaller photographic prints documenting all eras of the Grateful Dead experience. The exhibition centers on the work of Grateful Dead photographers Jay Blakesberg, Adrian Boot, Suki Coughlin, Greg Gaar, Andy Leonard, Rosie McGee, Bob Minkin, Ron Rakow, Jon Sievert, Elizabeth Sunflower, and Kirk West—who documented the Dead from its early days in the Haight-Ashbury through the Jerry Garcia years.

This presentation includes several images that are shown here for the first time, expanding on the exhibition's earlier iteration in Los Angeles and marking its New York debut. *An American Beauty* reflects the Blakesbergs' ongoing work overseeing the Retro Photo Archive and stewarding the legacies of the pioneering rock photographers who comprise it. Over the span of four decades, these photographers captured the Grateful Dead experience from a position of rare access and trust. Working within the band's extended orbit, these images capture both the musicians and the community that formed around them. Moving between intimate moments and large-scale performances, the work reflects a sustained engagement with a culture that redefined the relationship between artist and audience.

Over the course of their thirty-year history—and beyond—the Grateful Dead provided both a soundtrack and gathering point for cultural and countercultural movements. Their community, known for its inclusivity and eccentricity, nurtured many renowned rock photographers of the era, some of whom began their journey as Deadheads—passionate fans who evolved into important documentarians with an intuitive talent for capturing the energy of the scene around them. While portraits and performance images of the band became iconic symbols of the group's visual identity, equally important are images of the Deadhead community itself. Other pictures, like a 1968 photograph by Rosie McGee of Jerry Garcia and author and Merry Prankster Ken Kesey, provide direct evidence of the breadth of the band's influence in the many spheres with which it intersected.

Jay Blakesberg says, “I’ve been part of this Grateful Dead world for a long time—first as a fan, and then as a professional photographer. A lot of us Deadheads who were out there seeing shows started from the same place. We were documenting something organically from the inside as it was happening. I was just trying to capture the bliss that was in front of me. To see it recognized now, alongside the work of these other photographers at David Kordansky Gallery, makes it feel that much more important.”