

THE PLAIN DEALER

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Annual reports, a work of art, are bound for museum exhibit

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The George Gund Foundation says it with photographs.

And those powerful photographs, taken by world-famous photographers and featured in the foundation's annual reports since 1990, will be the subject of a Cleveland Museum of Art exhibit celebrating the foundation's 50th anniversary next year.

"We had no idea we'd end up doing this," said the foundation's executive director, David Bergholz.

It started as an attempt to get away from the "grip and grin" photos—the types featuring happy grant recipients accepting checks and a handshake—that were featured in the foundation's prior annual reports, Bergholz said. The resulting collection of black-and-white photo essays depicting life in Cleveland has become a foundation legacy, he said.

"The idea of using art in an annual report is not new," said Mark Schwartz of Nesnadny + Schwartz, the firm that designs the foundation's annual report and others. "But these pictures are so much more relevant."

Last year, the foundation commissioned Nicholas Nixon to photograph the Free Medical Clinic, which the foundation has supported since 1979. Nixon is among the nine artists contributing to "The Model Wife" exhibit now at the Cleveland Museum of Art. He has published several volumes of his work and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

The bold, up-close and intimate portraits that Nixon photographed in the examining rooms and waiting room of the clinic are featured in the foundation's oversized 2000 report.

In 1995, the foundation commissioned Lee Friedlander to photograph people working in Cleveland. Friedlander's work also is featured in the "Model Wife" exhibit. For the 1998 report, Larry Fink photographed the Cleveland School of the Arts and its students.

The 2001 report will include photographs of the Cleveland Metroparks system taken by Barbara Bosworth.

With that kind of talent, the foundation's annual reports have won more than 100 international, national and regional awards for excellence in communications, graphic design and photography, Schwartz said. This includes the



Photos, including this shot taken at the Free Medical Clinic, will be part of an exhibit at the Cleveland Museum of Art celebrating the George Gund Foundation's 50th anniversary. The collection of black-and-white photographs depicting life in Cleveland is also featured in the foundation's 2000 annual report.

Annual Report 100, the Mead Annual Report Show and the International ARC Awards.

The foundation displays about a dozen photographs from each of the photo essays from 1990 to the present in its offices in downtown Cleveland.

"Although I love having them here, we began to think maybe it would be a wonderful gift to the photographic arm of the Museum of Art," Bergholz said.

The foundation's second-quarter grant list included \$331,100 to the Cleveland Museum of Art for the 18-month exhibit of the foundation's annual-report photographs. The exhibit will open in September 2002.

The grant, the largest in the June grant cycle, will pay to assemble the exhibit, and for forum

discussions featuring the photographers and a commemorative coffee table book of the photographs. The book will be published by the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The book, "A City Seen," will include an essay written by John Szarkowski, the director emeritus of the department of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The Cleveland museum's director was not available to comment on the exhibit grant.

To see an online sample of the last 11 years of photographs from George Gund Foundation annual reports, go to the web site at gundfdn.org/images_f.html.