



ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM

presents

GALEN ROWELL A RETROSPECTIVE

FEBRUARY 17 TO JULY 2, 2007



News Release

THE ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM PRESENTS THE WORK OF A PHOTOGRAPHY ICON



Edmonton: The Royal Alberta Museum is proud to exhibit some of the best works from world-renowned adventure photographer Galen Rowell. ***Galen Rowell – A Retrospective*** features 39 of the late photographer's most impressive images, which will be on display from February 17 to July 2, 2007.

Rowell was the archetypal adventure photographer, having his iconic images published in leading magazines and scores of books, exhibited in major galleries and cherished by fans ranging from the Dalai Lama to news anchor Tom Brokaw. He had just completed a landmark assignment for *National Geographic* when he and his wife and business partner, Barbara Cushman Rowell, perished in a plane crash in 2002.

Rowell won several awards and commendations, including the Award for Lifetime Achievement in Nature Photography, awarded posthumously by the North American Nature Photography Association in 2003. Rowell's signature style essentially defined the niche known as adventure photography, and he left a legacy of 20 published books and thousands of licensed images.

Galen Rowell - A Retrospective is based on a book released in October 2006. This first comprehensive retrospective of his work combines his images and writings on a wide range of subjects, including climbing and expeditionary feats, exotic cultures, endangered wildlife and extraordinary places.

Note to media: you are welcome to drop by the Museum anytime between 10:30 am and 3 pm on Thursday, February 15 for a personal tour of the gallery with a member of our curatorial team.

The **Royal Alberta Museum** is located at 12845 - 102 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Visit our website at www.royalalbertamuseum.ca

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EXHIBITION ELEMENTS

“My interest in photography did not begin with a burning desire to see the world through a camera. It evolved through an intense devotion to wilderness that eventually shaped all parts of my life and brought them together.”

– Galen Rowell (2001); Reprinted with permission from the Mountain Light website (<http://mountainlight.com/rowellg.html>)

Galen Rowell - A Retrospective features 39 of Rowell’s most compelling images, all of which are featured in the 2006 book of the same name.

In addition to Rowell’s exquisite photographs, visitors can read the stories behind the images and hear a series of personal interviews at four audio stations.

“Galen Rowell was a man who went into the mountains, into the desert, to the edge of the sea, to the last great wild places in the world to be absorbed by their grace and grandeur. That is what he did for himself. For the rest of us, he shared his vision with —click— the release of a shutter, creating photographs as timeless, as stunning, and as powerful as nature itself.”

–Tom Brokaw, from the foreword of
Galen Rowell - A Retrospective



INTERACTIVE FEATURES/PROGRAMMING

National Geographic Film Series

All films are offered free of charge!

**1 pm on the 3rd Saturday of the month from March to June 2007
in the Museum Theatre**



Surviving Everest – 60 min

Saturday, March 17 at 1 pm

Not only does this film tell the untold stories of the first ascents of Mount Everest and the individuals who made them, it reveals that, in the 50 years since the first successful ascent, dramatic change has swept the mountain, the Khumbu region and the Sherpa people who live there.

Return to Everest – 60 min

Saturday, April 21 at 1 pm

Climbing legend Sir Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa companion, Tenzing Norgay return to the glory years with a detailed account of the original and subsequent conquest of Everest. Included is a rare look into the culture of the people of Kungbu, Nepal, and the noble relationship that exists between these two courageous pioneers.

The Photographers – 55 min

Saturday, May 19 at 1 pm

Going behind the camera and on assignment with veteran photographers for *National Geographic*, this documentary answers the eternal question asked by the magazine's readers: "How in the world did they get that shot?" The photographers recount the gruelling preparation that shooting for the magazine entails, from mundane details such as obtaining visas to preparing oneself for dangers such as severe climates, deep-sea dives, raging beasts, and local bandits.

Deadly Fashion – 26 min

Saturday, June 16 at 1 pm

In photographer Galen Rowell's last assignment, a *National Geographic* expedition team undertakes a gruelling 30-day trek in search of the rare and endangered Tibetan antelope "chiru". The ultimate aim of this expedition is to help expand the conservation of the chiru whose populations have been decimated by poachers to supply the black market trade in *shahtoosh*, which is among the world's most expensive wools.



BIOGRAPHY - GALEN AVERY ROWELL

August 23, 1940 — August 11, 2002

Reprinted with permission from the Mountain Light website

(<http://mountainlight.com/rowellg.html>)

Born in 1940 in Oakland and raised in Berkeley, California, to a college professor and a concert cellist, Galen was introduced to wilderness before he could walk. He began climbing mountains at the age of 10 on Sierra Club outings, and at 16 made his first roped climbs in Yosemite Valley. Over the next 15 years, he logged more than 100 first ascents of new routes there and in the High Sierra backcountry.

Taking photographs began as a way to share his high and wild world with friends and family. In 1972, he became a full-time photographer after selling his small automotive business. Less than a year later, he did his first major magazine assignment – a cover story for *National Geographic*.

Galen pioneered a special brand of participatory wilderness photography in which the photographer transcends being an observer with a camera to become an active participant in the image being photographed. His emotional connection to his subject matter came across clearly in his early mountain climbing photographs that first drew public recognition, but his landscape imagery, often made on the same adventures, has proven even more evocative because of the visual power he created from what he described as “a continuing pursuit in which the art becomes the adventure, and vice-versa.” In 1984, he received the *Ansel Adams Award* for his contributions to the art of wilderness photography. In 1992, Galen received a *National Science Foundation Artists and Writers Grant* to photograph Antarctica.

According to *The Washington Post*, “Galen Rowell may be the foremost practitioner of that hybrid art, photojournalism.” With the mobility allowed by 35mm equipment, he turned his own active participation into a hidden fourth dimension that made his work come alive.

No scene was taken for granted; the principles of action photography were applied to his landscapes and vice-versa. His favourite landscapes feature unexpected convergence of light and form, seemingly unrepeatable moments captured by combining imagination and action with a clear understanding of outdoor optical phenomena.

He called these images “dynamic landscapes” and his quest for them is documented in his bestselling 1986 book, *Mountain Light: In Search of the Dynamic Landscape*. His favourite images of people were those that show them in delicate harmony with a carefully selected part of their environment.

In the last 20 years of his life, Galen made more than 35 journeys to the mountains of Nepal, India, Pakistan, China, Tibet, Africa, Alaska, Canada, Siberia, New Zealand, Norway and Patagonia. Besides participating on major expeditions to Mount Everest, K2 and Gasherbrum II, he made the first one-day ascents of Mount McKinley in Alaska and Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, as well as first ascents of Himalayan peaks such as Cholatse and the Great Trango Tower. He also made the highest complete ascent and descent of a mountain on skis on Mustagh Ata (24,757 feet), as well as a 285-mile winter traverse of the Karakoram Himalaya.

When not doing assignments for *Life*, *National Geographic*, *Outdoor Photographer* or other publications, Rowell was likely to be found either writing at his Bishop home, climbing in the High Sierra, working at Mountain Light Gallery or hiking and photographing with his wife Barbara.



STORIES BEHIND THE IMAGES

- in Galen Rowell's own words

View from 16,000 feet, Mt. McKinley, Alaska, 1979

"I made this photograph on a climb of Mt. McKinley a year after circling the peak on skis and doing the first one-day ascent. I had carried only a tiny Minox above 14,000 feet on the one-day climb, but this time I had a Nikon with several lenses and far more time to spare. When a fellow climber walked out of camp to look over the top of a section called The Headwall to see if other climbers were on their way up, I followed him with my camera and caught his moment of contemplation in this hand-held shot. Although I also made images of people at this camp in splendid twilight colors, those failed to convey the broad sense of place that comes across in this more open lighting. At about 10 pm on a June night with 24-hour daylight on the upper mountain, the low-angled light was just beginning to cast long shadows across the cloud layers below, which would soon destroy this expansive appearance."

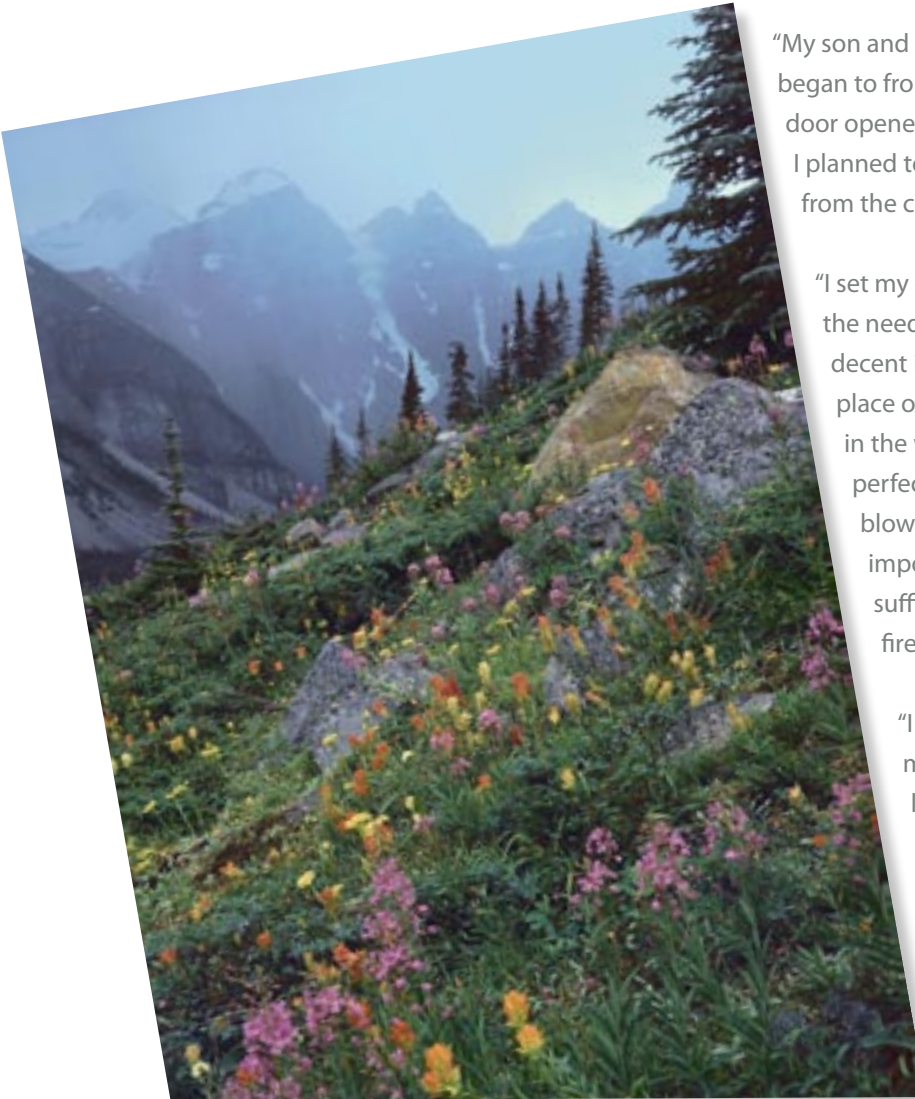


Valley of the Ten Peaks, Banff Park, Canadian Rockies, 1973

"Carl Sharsmith, a legendary Yosemite botanist and an old friend of my family, was asked by a tourist what he would do if he had only one day to spend in the park. He replied, 'I'd cry.'

"I was faced with a similar dilemma in Banff Park in the Canadian Rockies. I had one day to spare between flying down the Alaska Highway in a small plane and driving home to California with my family. Had that day been in Yosemite, the odds are good that it would have been warm and sunny. I could have climbed a peak, hiked a trail, or gone swimming in a mountain lake. It rained steadily as I drove a carload of tired travelers through the park, searching for something to hold their interest.

"From Lake Louise we took a side road to Moraine Lake in the Valley of the Ten Peaks. As we came out of a forest into our first open view of the mountains, I saw wildflowers in profusion on the hillsides. The rain had slowed to a light drizzle, and the wet wildflowers seemed to glow with an intensity far greater than normal. In the distance I could see a downpour in the valley itself, right where we were heading. Had I not seen the rain ahead and felt somewhat responsible for the happiness of my passengers, I probably wouldn't have stopped where I did. I chose a field of flowers that climbed a hillside toward the distant peaks, hiding the lake and highway in between.



"My son and daughter, aged five and nine, respectively, began to frolic through the flowers as soon as the car door opened. I kept them from trampling the scene I planned to photograph, which was about 50 feet from the car.

"I set my camera on a tripod and wrestled with the need to make compromises in order to get a decent image. A flower photographer's hell is a place of tremendous beauty where every species in the world stays in bloom in continuously perfect light and where a gentle breeze blows eternally, making sharp photographs impossible. Here the breeze was light but sufficient nevertheless to move the tall fireweed in the foreground.

"I had wanted to get a bold image by moving in close with my 55mm macro lens and holding the background slightly out of focus. Technically, I couldn't do it with ASA 25 Kodachrome because the flowers were moving too much. I began to analyze the scene by

putting on the 200mm telephoto to turn the camera into a makeshift spot metre. I wanted to compare the light values of the peaks in the rain with the flowers under a brightening sky. Luckily they were almost the same. Now I knew I was safe in making the mountains a major part of my image so long as I cropped out as much of the distractingly bright sky as possible. When I tried that with my 24mm lens, however, new problems arose. The peaks seemed too far away, and the trees tipped sideways with a parallax distortion when I aimed the lens downward.

“By now, the children were covered with mud and getting impatient. I posed a couple of hasty shots of them in the flowers, but I felt pressure to make them quickly and to get the car moving again. I finally settled on a 35mm lens set at f/11, which gave me good enough depth of field, while retaining a shutter speed high enough to hold a fairly sharp image when the breeze ebbed to its lowest. The slight blur in some of the foreground flowers is due to their motion, not the camera’s.

“Because my family and friends wanted to get going, I worked quickly. I knew my camera, and I knew the light was dead even, so I didn’t bracket any exposure or try any filters. I made only two landscape images, each with slightly different compositions, then spent the rest of the afternoon driving in the rain, ready to cry inside.”



Vermilion Lakes, Canadian Rockies 1980

“In midwinter, I was surprised to find that liquid water had created a mirror surface on this frozen lake in Banff National Park. A combination of warm springs at the edge of the lake and a warm Chinook wind had allowed the water to flow in road arcs across the ice. I didn’t shoot any pictures when I first found the scene because the light was flat under cloudy skies. A few days later, however, I saw the full moon low in the sky with the first flush of alpenglow hitting spectacular clouds. I rushed back to the lake in my rental car and quickly set my camera up on

a tripod to make this photograph. My metre indicated that the reflection on the lake in deep shadow was a full three stops darker than the sunlit clouds, so I used a two-stop graduated neutral-density filter to open up the shadows and bring the exposure within the film’s range. The great light was gone in less than five minutes.”

**Crescent moon and unnamed peak,
Savoia Glacier, Karakoram Himalaya 1975**

"The apparent simplicity of this image belies the major technical and aesthetic complication of creating it. When I saw a crescent moon beside the corniced ridge of a peak, I took it as a challenge to see if I could make a fine image. Even though the moon was at least eight stops brighter than the peak an hour after sunset, I figured that the scene had potential for an extreme telephoto lens. A burned-out thin crescent is still pleasing to the eye. We look for detail within the moon to validate our impression of a full moon, but we look only at the outline of a crescent moon. The problem was that the 30-second exposure I needed for the mountain with my $f8$ mirror-reflex 500mm lens and ISO 64 film would blur the moon because of movement. I calculated that I needed eight seconds or less not to blur the outline, so I bracketed a number of exposures around four and eight seconds, chose a slide with sharp detail but at least two stops of underexposure, and brightened it back to where I wanted on duplicating film. I called it my secret Kodachrome 400."





WHAT'S IN GALEN ROWELL'S CAMERA BAG

Cameras

Nikon F100

This was Galen's primary camera for the last few years of his life, replacing his N90s. It may be the most practical Nikon ever for photography in the field.

Nikon N80

A lightweight camera with virtually all of the important features that an advanced photographer could ever want—this may be the best value in a 35mm SLR. Galen used the N80 extensively on treks, climbs and trail runs.

Nikon F4

Galen's primary camera in the late 80s and early 90s, he continued to use it with considerable frequency. Considering the amazing F5 too heavy for his "fast & light" style, Galen preferred the F4 with its light and compact MB-20 grip loaded with 4 lithium AA batteries, and he loved its matrix metering compatibility with his manual focus Nikkor lenses. In later years, this unstoppable workhorse was called into service primarily for aerial, macro and some long telephoto work.

Nikon FM-10 and FE-10

These inexpensive, lightweight, plastic, manual focus bodies accompanied Galen when he needed to go ultra-light on climbs and trail runs. These cameras prove that the priority is to "be there when the light is right" even if only with a simple camera and lens. The top of the line quality of modern "professional" cameras and lenses often comes with a weight penalty that can incline the photographer toward photographing from the roadside, rather than going further afield for a better position and a superior photograph.

Lenses (all Nikkor)

15mm f3.5 AI-S

Rectilinear extreme wide angle.

16mm f2.8 AF-D

Full-frame "fisheye" lens.

18–35mm f3.5–4.5 ED AF-D

Optical performance competitive with the Nikkor 17-35 f2.8 AF-S at a third of the price and weight. This was a fixture in Galen's camera bag.

20mm f4 AI

This was among Galen's favourite lenses for landscape photography. It was only made **11**



for a brief period in the 1970s, and was therefore manual focus, but it is extremely compact, lightweight, and optically the best 20mm Nikon has produced.

24mm f2.8 AI-S and AF-D

Lighter and with less flare than the 24mm f2.0. Galen once said that a high percentage of his best images could have probably been made with only a 24mm and an 80-200 zoom.

28mm f3.5 PC

Manual focus perspective control lens for critical architectural work.

35mm f1.4 AI-S

Galen mostly used this fast wide-angle for aerial photography with his Nikon F4 which offers Matrix metering with manual focus lenses. In a bouncing, vibrating airplane, a fast shutter speed permitted by the fast f1.4 aperture is critical for sharpness, and focus is almost always at infinity, so auto focus is unnecessary.

35mm f2.0 AF-D

Extremely compact, light and sharp general purpose wide angle.

35–70mm f2.8 AF-D

For spontaneous handheld work with moving subjects.

70–300mm f4–5.6 ED AF-D

This lens delivers a wide telephoto zoom range with publishable optical quality (especially stopped down a couple of fstops) in a very lightweight and compact package.

80–200mm f2.8 AF-D

Fast and sharp. Prior to the release of the 80-400VR lens, this was a permanent fixture in Galen's general purpose kit, and he continued to use it frequently for landscapes, action, cultural portraits, and wildlife.

80-400mm f4.5-5.6 ED AF-D VR

This lens would be fantastic even without its vibration reduction feature that allows handheld shooting at shutter speeds 2-3 stops slower than normal. Optical performance is excellent throughout its huge range of focal lengths, and it is fairly lightweight for a big zoom. This lens frequently displaced the 80–200mm f2.8 in Galen's bag as his general purpose telephoto zoom.

85mm f1.4 AI-S

Galen mostly used this fast short telephoto for aerial work for the same reasons as the 35mm f1.4.

300mm f2.8 ED AF

Used primarily for wildlife and action photography, the various designs of the Nikkor 300 f2.8 are all industry leaders in optical performance.



500mm f4.0 ED P

This manual focus lens incorporates a microchip that gives it the electronic functionality of an AF Nikkor, without the autofocus of course. Galen prized this super-telephoto for its optical quality, and for its relative portability compared to the heavier 400mm f2.8 or 600mm f4 lenses.

TC-14B and TC-301

Galen made extensive use of these teleconverters for wildlife and landscape photography to get more magnification out of his long telephotos.

Filters

Galen Rowell Singh-Ray Graduated Neutral Density Filters

(fit Cokin P series holder). Standard grads: 3-stop hard edge, 2-stop hard edge, 3-stop soft, 2-stop soft. Custom grads: 5-stop hard edge, 4-stop hard edge (available from Mountain Light on a special order basis).

Singh-Ray Filters

Circular Polarizer and Warming Circular Polarizer.

Nikon Filters

Assorted UV, 81A, and Circular Polarizer filters.

Lighting

Nikon Speedlight

SB-28, SB-26 and SB-24

Rosco Gel Filters

Used to warm the harsh daylight colour temperature of the flash output to more closely match the “magic hour” light in which he typically photographed.

Remote Flash Accessories

Nikon SC-17 off-camera TTL flash cord, Litelink wireless TTL slave unit.

Photoflex Light Discs

12” Soft Gold reflector, 12” White reflector, 12” translucent disc (softens harsh light).

Tripods

Galen most recently used the Gitzo 1228 and 1348 carbon fibre models with Arca-Swiss and Kirk ballheads and Arca-style quick release plates by Kirk and Really Right Stuff. He also used the tiny Gitzo 001 on trail runs.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Galen Rowell - A Retrospective features 188 of Rowell's best photographs representing all phases and dimensions of his career. The images were chosen by the editors with whom Rowell worked most closely, by Mountain Light General Manager / Curator / Photographer Justin Black, and by Rowell's daughter Nicole Rowell Ryan. Production was overseen by Black and Ryan. Photographic reproductions were produced to the highest standards of lithography from digital masters of Rowell's 35mm transparencies, many of which were newly prepared by Black for the volume.

Complementing and illuminating the photographs are essays and commentaries by Rowell's family and associates from the worlds of mountaineering, conservation, photography and publishing. They include photographers Sir Frans Lanting and David Muench; mountaineers Doug Robinson, Conrad Anker, Rick Ridgeway and Gordon Wiltsie; pre-eminent field biologist Dr. George Schaller; climbing historian Steve Roper; president of the Yosemite Fund Bob Hansen; president of the International Campaign for Tibet John Ackerly; and *Outdoor Photographer* magazine publisher Steve D. Werner. Contributions also came from Ryan and Black as well as from Rowell's son, Tony, and from Dean Stevens, Mountain Light Photography's Photo Licensing Manager.

Former NBC Nightly News Managing Editor and Anchor Tom Brokaw wrote the book's foreword. Novelist Robert Roper provided an in-depth biographical introduction and former *New York Times* photography critic Andy Grundberg contributed a critical appreciation of Rowell's work.

IN MEMORIAM

Galen Rowell

August 23rd, 1940 - August 11th, 2002

Barbara Cushman Rowell

January 29th, 1948 - August 11th, 2002

On August 11, 2002 at approximately 1:24 am, world-renowned wilderness photographer and writer Galen Rowell, and his wife and business partner Barbara Cushman Rowell, a photographer and writer in her own right, died early Sunday morning in an airplane crash outside of Bishop, California.

The Rowells, who were returning to their Bishop home from a circumnavigation of the Bering Sea, were passengers in a small privately owned plane that went down south of the Bishop Airport. The cause of the crash remains under investigation by NTSB and FAA officials.

The plane carried four people and there were no survivors. Tom Reid of Bishop piloted the plane. The fourth passenger was Carol McAfee, also of Bishop.

Galen is survived by two children from a previous marriage, Nicole Ryan and "Tony" Edward Anthony Rowell, and two grandsons, Forrest Avery Ryan and Colby Dustin Ryan.

Barbara is survived by her mother Lucile Cushman, brother Robert Cushman, and nieces Mariah and Grace Cushman.



MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission:

Adult	\$10
Senior (65 years and older)	\$8
Student (with ID)	\$7
Youth (7-17)	\$5
Children (age 6 and under)	Free
Family Pass	\$28

Half-price admission is offered every Saturday and Sunday between 9 and 11 am.

Annual Mammoth Pass:

(Unlimited Admission plus benefits)

Adult (18-64 years)	\$15
Senior (65 and over)	\$10
Student (with ID)	\$10
Youth (7-17)	\$8
Family	\$30
(Two adults and children 7-17)	
Grandparent	\$40
(Two grandparents and children 7-17)	

Hours:

Daily: 9 am to 5 pm

Half price Saturdays and Sundays from 9 am to 11 pm

The Museum Shop

The Museum Shop is the perfect place to find unique gifts and keepsakes. You'll find one-of-a-kind pieces of jewellery, heritage books, colourful clothing and toys from days gone by.

Try our exclusive *Museum Tea*, and lose yourself in the *Synchrude Gallery of Aboriginal Culture* book.