



For Immediate Release

Corbis Opens Sygma Preservation and Access Facility

New Facility Outside Paris Will Preserve Sygma's Extraordinary Photography Collection for more than a Thousand Years While Making Images Accessible for Photographers, Researchers, Iconographers, Historians and Creatives Worldwide

PARIS (May 15, 2009) - Corbis (www.corbis.com), a leading visual media provider for the creative community, today announced the opening of the Sygma Preservation and Access Facility, the culmination of the Sygma Preservation and Access Initiative started in 2004. The announcement was made at an event held at the new facility outside of Paris, France, attended by photographers, photo editors, government dignitaries, and executives from Corbis and Locarchives, the document management company that built the facility.

The culmination of more than five years of work, the Sygma Preservation and Access Facility ensures that the collection's 50 million negatives, prints, colour transparencies, and contact prints are carefully preserved and easily accessible for research and rediscovery by photographers, researchers, iconographers, historians as well as photo editors and art directors.

"The Sygma Preservation and Access Facility is a testament to our commitment to preserving the profoundly important Sygma collection," said Gary Shenk, CEO, Corbis. "So many talented photographers have contributed to Sygma, and we are honoured to safeguard and make accessible these treasures for today and the future."

With guidance from Henry Wilhelm, an expert in the long-term preservation of photographs who conducted a detailed examination of the Sygma collection for Corbis in 2006, Locarchives designed and built a specialized preservation facility dedicated to the Sygma collection located in Garnay, approximately 45 minutes outside Paris. The close proximity to Paris makes it easy for professionals to consult the archives in person. The 800-square-meter (8,600 square feet) facility has approximately 7,000 meters (4.3 miles) of shelving in a temperature and humidity-controlled, airtight environment with advanced fire safety and security protections.

"The comprehensive analogue and digital preservation program will systematically phase in minus 20°C (minus 4°F), humidity-controlled cold storage to halt gradual colour fading and prevent deterioration of the acetate plastic film base of the irreplaceable photographic originals," said Wilhelm. "To preserve the high-resolution digital scans made of the photographs and the digital camera captures produced by photographers in recent years, Corbis has provided secure servers that are backed-up offsite."

“If the collection had remained in the uncontrolled, room-temperature conditions where it had been kept for so many years, it would have perished before the end of this century,” continued Wilhelm. “The new Sygma facility will preserve and make accessible the extraordinary legacy of the work of the Sygma photographers for the people of France - and for the world - for more than a thousand years into the future.”

While the originals can be accessed at the facility, Corbis has worked with photographers to identify and digitize the most significant images from the collection to make them available on the Corbis web site. Over the past few years, Corbis has digitized 80,000 additional photographs to bring the total number from the collection available online to more than 800,000.

Since Corbis began the initiative in 2004, a dedicated team of Corbis archivists have been reorganizing the collection to classify pictures by photographer rather than by theme, and editors have been selecting new images to digitize and promote more extensively. Corbis also contacted more than 10,000 contributors to confirm that they wished to participate in the initiative. Meanwhile, Corbis identified a suitable location for the new facility and undertook construction

“Corbis has invested in a world-class facility that was specially designed for the long-term preservation of the Sygma collection,” said Pierre Fonlupt, President, Locarchives. “The photographic heritage conserved here is awe-inspiring, and we are proud to be part of the project.”

Sygma is one of the greatest collections of documentary photography in the world. It is an invaluable historical record of important people and events in France, Europe and around the world. It is comprised of nine separate collections from the second half of the 20th century. The 1950s and 1960s imagery includes photography from Apis, Universal Photo, Interpress, Spitzer, Reporter Associés and other agencies. The collections from the 1970s and beyond includes the prestigious photojournalism, news, magazines, celebrities and portraits from the Sygma photo agency, as well as television and movie set imagery from Kipa, and sporting events from Tempsport.

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About Corbis

Corbis is a leading visual media provider for the creative community, licensing the widest array of award-winning contemporary, historical and entertainment photography as well as extensive collections of acclaimed illustration and footage. Its imagery is seen everyday around the world in advertising, media, publishing and corporate communications. Corbis is headquartered in Seattle with 18 offices throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Australia that serve more than 50 countries worldwide. For more information, visit www.corbis.com.

For more information or images from the Sygma Collection, press only, please contact:

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