

# THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION

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Julia Engelbrecht & Tonya Bell

[GordonParksFoundation@sunshinesachs.com](mailto:GordonParksFoundation@sunshinesachs.com)

212.691.2800

## THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2018 FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS Photographer Deana Lawson & Multidisciplinary Artist Derrick Adams

March 8, 2018 - Pleasantville, New York – **The Gordon Parks Foundation** announced today that photographer **Deana Lawson** of Rochester, NY and multidisciplinary artist **Derrick Adams** of Baltimore, MD have been selected as the 2018 Gordon Parks Foundation Fellows. Now in its second year, The Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship Program supports artists working across a range of artistic disciplines – from photography and music to film and beyond - by providing short-term grants of \$10,000, and an exhibition at the Foundation’s exhibition space in Pleasantville, New York. Fellowships are awarded to artists working within themes of social justice.

“Deana Lawson and Derrick Adams are continuing in the footsteps of Gordon Parks,” said Peter W. Kunhardt, Jr., Executive Director of The Gordon Parks Foundation. “The fellowship program comes at such a critical time for their continued development as artists. Deana and Derrick have such bold approaches to exploring connection – whether across generations or between man and monument, and we couldn’t be more pleased to have named them both our fellows.”

Photographer **Deana Lawson** notes that like Gordon, her motivation is to create photographs that give meaningful texture and complexity to images of global black culture. She states, “Photography is essential because it allows me to use the language of formal portraiture, social documentary, and imagined fictions to explore critical issues within communal relationships, identity, and beauty.” Of the fellowship, she notes, “One of my earliest inspirations in photography was the work of Gordon Parks. I’m continually fascinated by Parks ability to capture infinite information and stories in a single picture. His work is timeless and to receive the Gordon Parks Fellowship in his legacy is a true honor.”

Lawson is currently working on a series that depict families in Ghana and Chicago in their domestic and semi-private spaces – a continuation of a larger ongoing body of work where she has photographed in Swaziland, Congo, Haiti, Alabama, Los Angeles and Detroit, and more – all locations chosen for representing mythologies in the continent of Africa, the West Indian Islands and American cities where black bodies have migrated or were displaced during the transatlantic slave trade. By traveling to continue photographing in Ghana and Chicago, Lawson hopes to depict how the Ashanti kingdom—once one of the most powerful empires in sub-Saharan Africa—re-emerges and manifests itself in present day. The project will create portraits of modern day Ashanti descents.

**Derrick Adams**, who works across mediums including performance, video, sound, paint, textile- and paper-based collage, and multimedia sculpture – has an artistic practice that is rooted in deconstructivist philosophies, such as the fragmentation and manipulation of structure and surface, and the marriage of complex and improbable forms. In his recent body of work entitled *Welcome to Monument City*, Adams responded directly to Gordon Parks’ *Emerging Man*, Harlem, New York, 1952, with photo and sculpture that addressed the complex relationship between man and monument.

Through the series, Adams showed that man and monument coexist in the landscape as representatives or reflections of each other - one being mortal and impermanent, and the other serving as a (semi-) permanent structure erected to commemorate a person or event for what we intend to be an eternity. With the Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship, Adams will supplement this with new works that represent a continuation of the powerful series. Of the fellowship, he notes, “Receiving a 2018 Gordon Parks Fellowship is one of the most meaningful

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achievements in my creative journey. Parks' influence on my work goes beyond the visual, into the meaning and purpose of why I feel it's so important to show the many facets of Black American life in ways that shed light onto the complexity and richness of our past, present and future."

For more information about The Gordon Parks Foundation, please visit: [gordonparksfoundation.org](http://gordonparksfoundation.org).

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## **About Deana Lawson**

Photographer Deana Lawson is currently working on prolonged series of portraits that continue her exploration of the body in diasporic spaces. Lawson received the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in 2013, which gave her the opportunity photograph internationally. She has photographed in DR Congo, Haiti, Jamaica, Ethiopia, and most recently Swaziland and South Africa. Her work has been published in ArtForum, TIME Magazine, The New Yorker, and Aperture. Lawson was included in the 2017 Whitney Biennial and currently has work on view at Sikkema Jenkins Gallery in New York. Deana Lawson's first monograph, with an essay by Zadie Smith and an interview by Arthur Jafa, will be published by Aperture in September 2018. Lawson is currently an Assistant Professor in Photography at Princeton University.

## **About Derrick Adams**

Derrick Adams is a New York-based, multidisciplinary artist. His practice is rooted in deconstructivist philosophies such as the fragmentation and manipulation of structure and surface, and the marriage of complex and improbable forms. Through these techniques, Adams examines the force of popular culture and the media on the perception and construction of self-image. Adams received his MFA from Columbia University, BFA from Pratt Institute, and is an alumni of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, as well as the recipient of the Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize, Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, S.J. Weiler Award, and Agnes Martin Fellowship. He's exhibited and performed at MoMA PS1, Brooklyn Museum of Art, PERFORMA, Studio Museum in Harlem, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The California African American Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Museum of Arts and Design, among other notable galleries and institutions. Adams' work is in the permanent collections of Studio Museum in Harlem, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Birmingham Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art.

## **About The Gordon Parks Foundation**

The Gordon Parks Foundation's mission is to permanently preserve the work of Gordon Parks, make it available to the public through exhibitions, books, and electronic media, and support artistic and educational activities that advance what Parks described as "the common search for a better life and a better world." The primary purpose of The Gordon Parks Foundation's exhibition space is to present focused exhibits of Parks' photography, as part of the Foundation's commitment to educating the public and preserving his work.

## **About Gordon Parks**

Gordon Parks was a seminal figure of twentieth century photography. A humanitarian with a deep commitment to social justice, he left behind a body of work that documents many of the most important aspects of American culture from the early 1940s up until his death in 2006, with a focus on race relations, poverty, civil rights, and urban life. In addition, Parks was also a celebrated composer, author, and filmmaker who interacted with many of the most prominent people of his era - from politicians and artists to celebrities and athletes.