

The Gordon Parks Foundation and Steidl Expand Partnership with Launch of New Book Prize and Opening of Steidl Library

LaToya Ruby Frazier Named Inaugural Gordon Parks Foundation/Steidl Prize Recipient

**The Gordon Parks Foundation to Open Comprehensive Library of Steidl Publications
at its Pleasantville, New York Headquarters**

Pleasantville, NY, US and Göttingen, Germany – February 5, 2020 –The Gordon Parks Foundation and Steidl today announced the expansion of its ongoing partnership with the launch of **The Gordon Parks Foundation/Steidl Book Prize** and the opening of the **Steidl Library**, a collection of over 3,000 art and photography books, at the Foundation’s headquarters in Pleasantville, New York. Pioneering artist **LaToya Ruby Frazier** has been named the inaugural recipient of the Prize, as an artist whose work exemplifies Parks’ commitment to using photography as a powerful tool for advancing social justice.

Conceived of by The Gordon Parks Foundation Executive Director Peter W. Kunhardt, Jr. and Gerhard Steidl, The Gordon Parks Foundation/Steidl Book Prize serves as a publishing platform for artists whose practice reflects and extends Gordon Parks’ legacy. Published and distributed by Steidl, one of the leading art book publishers internationally, each book will feature new work by a contemporary or mid-career artist. Frazier’s book, to be published in 2021, will feature new work by the artists and texts by notable writers, and will be edited by Michal Raz-Russo, Associate Curator of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago. Each book resulting from the Prize will be marked by an exhibition and programming that will further advance the foundation’s mission to extend Parks’ collaborative legacy to a range of artistic, cultural, and scholarly practices—by addressing how art can perpetuate social, cultural, and political change.

“Gordon Parks’ vision and actions as a photographer, composer, filmmaker, and writer have taught me to fight for humanity, empathy, justice, and integrity in all of my photographs,” Frazier said. “His everlasting endurance to unveil the power of visual storytelling on his own terms, in the face of bigotry, violence, and institutional inequality, teach me to create works of art that lift the voice and visibility of the people in ways that triumph over systemic and structural abuse in America.”

In tandem with the launch of the Prize is the opening of a comprehensive Steidl Library at The Gordon Parks Foundation in Pleasantville, New York. Encompassing more than 3,000 Steidl art and photography books, essay books, the collection includes out-of-print, one-of-a-kind, and limited-edition publications that are rarely-seen or often inaccessible to scholars and the public. The Library includes works by some of the most significant artists and photographers across history, in addition to Gordon Parks, including Bernice Abbott, William Eggleston, Robert Frank, Karl Lagerfeld, and Dayanita Singh. Access to the collection will be available to researchers by appointment beginning later this year.

“Following nearly a decade of partnership with Steidl as the official publisher of Gordon Parks and the publication of eleven books together, we are pleased to expand our collaboration to support artists working in Parks’ legacy,” said Kunhardt, Jr. “The Prize builds on the Foundation’s robust program of scholarships, prizes, and fellowships that support artists whose work is anchored in advancing social

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justice. We are additionally honored to be selected as one of the few custodians of the Steidl Library in North America and to extend the purview of the Foundation's role in preserving archives and collections for the public and future generations."

"I'm thrilled to jointly launch The Gordon Parks Foundation/Steidl Book Prize, encouraging artists to continue their practice in the spirit of Gordon Parks' own exceptional oeuvre," said Gerhard Steidl. "In the same spirit, I hope the Steidl Library becomes a paradise for booklovers where they can explore not only the contents of our books but all their facets as meticulously-made book multiples."

The Foundation and Steidl have worked together since 2010, having published eleven books including the recently released *Gordon Parks x Muhammad Ali* (2019). Other collaborations include catalogues for major museum exhibitions, including *The New Tide, Early Work 1940-1950* (2018) at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC., *The Flavio Story* (2017) at the J. Paul Getty Museum, and *Invisible Man: Gordon Parks and Ralph Ellison in Harlem* (2016) at the Art Institute of Chicago. The full list of publications is available [here](#).

ABOUT LATOYA RUBY FRAZIER

LaToya Ruby Frazier is a visual artist known for collaborative storytelling with the people who appear in her photographs, videos, texts, and performances. Her use of the photograph as a platform for social justice and visual representation for working-class families is rooted in her commitment to expose the violation of basic human rights and promote environmental justice, access to healthcare, education, employment, and migration and immigration equity. Her photographs often become a source of empowerment that leads to creative solutions.

Her well-known bodies of work include: *The Notion of Family*, three generations of women in Frazier's own family, including herself, surviving environmental racism and healthcare inequality in steel mill town, Braddock, Pennsylvania; *Flint Is Family*, portraits of three generations of women surviving the man-made water crisis in Flint, Michigan; and *And From The Coaltips A Tree Will Rise*, coalminers' reflections on their memories of migration, immigration, work and labor in coalmining village, Borinage Belgium.

Frazier's newest work, *The Last Cruze*, is a monument and memorial comprised of 67 photographs and texts on an assembly line for auto workers from the historic labor union United Auto Workers Local 1112 in Lordstown, Ohio. Frazier documented the unallocated status and closure of the General Motors Lordstown Complex in northeast Ohio and the impact on autoworkers, their families and the community.

Frazier is an associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is a 2015 MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow, a 2016 Gordon Parks Foundation Award recipient for her contribution to photography and visual arts. LaToya Ruby Frazier is represented by Gavin Brown's Enterprise in New York City and Rome.

ABOUT THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION

The Gordon Parks Foundation supports and produces artistic and educational initiatives that advance the legacy and vision of Gordon Parks—recognized as the most significant African American photographer of the 20th century, as well as a writer, musician, and filmmaker, who used the arts to further "the common search for a better life and a better world."

Through exhibitions, publications, and public programs organized in collaboration with national and international institutions at its exhibition space in Pleasantville, New York, the Foundation provides access

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to, and supports understanding of, the work and contributions of Gordon Parks for artists, scholars, students, and the public. Through its year-round educational programming and annual grant-making initiatives, the Foundation champions current and future generations of artists and humanitarians whose work carries on Parks' legacy.

ABOUT GORDON PARKS

Gordon Parks, one of the greatest photographers of the twentieth century, was a humanitarian with a deep commitment to social justice. He left behind an exceptional body of work that documents American life and culture from the early 1940s into the 2000s, with a focus on race relations, poverty, civil rights, and urban life. Parks was also a distinguished composer, author, and the first African American filmmaker to helm a studio film. His celebrated artistic work includes photographs taken for the Farm Security Administration (FSA), the Office of War Information (OWI), *Life*, *Glamour*, and *Ebony*, as well as his literary work, including the novel *The Learning Tree*, which he adapted, directed, and scored as a film, and his direction of the feature film *Shaft* (1971). Parks' work is held in the permanent collections of major museums across the United States.

ABOUT STEIDL VERLAG

One of the most respected printers in the international publishing world, Gerhard Steidl personally selects the paper and binding materials for each title and oversees all aspects of the production process. Every Steidl book distinguishes itself through individual design and production values.

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