

# THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION

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## The Gordon Parks Foundation Hosts “Beneath These Restless Skies” A Multimedia Exhibition by 2017 Fellowship Recipient Harriet Dedman

*Exhibition to Open on February 23, and Remain on Display through May 4*

February 1, 2018 - Pleasantville, New York – **The Gordon Parks Foundation** today announced exhibition dates for *Beneath These Restless Skies*, a new interactive multimedia exhibition by British documentary photographer and 2017 Gordon Parks Foundation Fellow **Harriet Dedman**. The exhibition, which explores issues of identity and opportunity in West Harlem, will be on view at the Foundation’s exhibition space from February 23 through May 4, with an opening reception with the artist to be held on February 23. The reception is free and open to the public.

*Beneath These Restless Skies* tracks the life of 24-year-old Trevor Brown and his wider generation: disenfranchised, with limited social mobility and meager opportunities to move beyond an education secured in a post affirmative action era. Dedman’s work is inspired by Gordon Parks’ Civil Rights-era photo essay about the Fontenelle family that appeared in *LIFE* magazine 50 years prior. Through the project, and over the course of two years, she immersed herself in the lives of the Brown family who live along the same stretch of 123rd Street as the Fontenelles and face many of the same enduring hardships—poverty, unemployment and racism.

Dedman said, “This is a series about identity and stereotypes, profiles and profiling, and a generation of young men lost in the wake of marching change—50 years after Gordon Parks.”

Dedman’s exhibit will allow viewers to interact with the Browns’ story through photographs, archival maps, video, and audio. The artist worked with [Empathetic Media](#) to create an immersive virtual reality experience using 360 video, 3D scans of environments and characters, audio interviews, archival video and photography by both Dedman and Parks. The VR experience will debut at the February 23 opening reception where patrons will be invited to explore Trevor’s world.

In 1967, Gordon Parks first visited the Fontenelle family. Tasked by the editors of *LIFE* magazine, where he worked as its first African-American photographer, Parks was asked to identify why African Americans “were rioting in the streets.” His answer was curt and pragmatic. “Poverty and racism,” he replied. The Fontenelles were to be his every family, living in desperate conditions within a tenement building in West Harlem. The series of photographs – alongside his work with Harlem gang leader, Red Jackson - would form some of his most significant images against the backdrop of the Civil Rights Movement.

For more information about The Gordon Parks Foundation, please visit [gordonparksfoundation.org](http://gordonparksfoundation.org) and follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

**For more information and press images please contact Amanda Smith at 914-238-2619 or [amanda@mkfound.org](mailto:amanda@mkfound.org).**

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#### Hours & Admission

Free and open to the public.  
M-F: 10am - 4pm  
Sa-Su: Closed

#### General Information

48 Wheeler Avenue, Floor 1  
Pleasantville, NY 10570  
Tel: (914) 238-2619  
Website: [www.gordonparksfoundation.org](http://www.gordonparksfoundation.org)

#### Social Media

Facebook: The Gordon Parks Foundation  
Twitter: @GparksFound  
Instagram: [gordonparksfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/gordonparksfoundation)

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## About Harriet Dedman

Based in New York, Dedman is a British documentary photographer, journalist and filmmaker. Harriet's work has been published by major outlets, including: HBO, VICE News, BBC World, BBC News, CNN Money, CNN International, AJ+, *Smithsonian Magazine*, Slate, ABC and The Financial Times. She is currently a staff Producer for the Emmy award-winning documentary newscast, VICE News Tonight on HBO, covering stories from the deployment of US troops to the Russian border, to the plight of Colombia's coca farmers and the de-militarization of the FARC-EP. Over the course of 2015 and 2016, Harriet reported extensively on the Syrian refugee crisis, from Greece, Germany and the Jordanian border camps, and forms part of the cinematography team behind the feature documentary, *Refugee*. Previously based in Asia, she has covered stories throughout the region, including Hong Kong's 2014 Umbrella Revolution and the cessation of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009. An international lawyer, she has worked for leading British and US law firms, the United Nations and the British foreign and commonwealth office. Harriet was awarded the inaugural 2017 Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship, for her ongoing photography series in Harlem, "highlighting the humanity and creative spirit of Gordon Parks."

## About Gordon Parks

Gordon Parks was born into poverty and segregation in Fort Scott, Kansas, in 1912. An itinerant laborer, he worked as a brothel pianist and railcar porter, among other jobs, before buying a camera at a pawnshop, training himself, and becoming a photographer. During his storied tenures photographing for the Farm Security Administration (1941–1945) and Life magazine (1948–c. 1971), Parks evolved into a modern-day Renaissance man; he found success as a film director, writer, and composer. The first African American director to helm a major motion picture, he helped launch the blaxploitation genre with his film *Shaft* (1971). He wrote numerous memoirs, novels, and books of poetry, and received countless awards, including the National Medal of Arts, and more than fifty honorary degrees. Parks died in 2006.

## 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.

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