

THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION

“A Beautiful Ghetto”

A New Photography Exhibition by 2017 Fellowship Recipient Devin Allen

Pleasantville, New York – **The Gordon Parks Foundation** announces the upcoming exhibition of photographs *A Beautiful Ghetto* on view at the Foundation’s exhibition space from September 15 through November 18, 2017, which showcases the 2017 Gordon Parks Foundation Fellow **Devin Allen**’s documentation of the landscape and community of Baltimore immediately following the death of Freddie Gray. Born and raised in West Baltimore, Allen gained national attention when one of his photographs of the protests was published on the cover of *Time Magazine* – only the third time the work of an amateur photographer had been showcased there.

In mid-April 2015, the city of Baltimore erupted in mass protests in response to the arrest, hospitalization and resulting death of Freddie Gray who was severely injured while in police custody. This exhibition provides a window into the heart of the frustration and outrage of a community in response to police brutality not only in their own city, but nationwide. Allen's camera acts as a witness to the first peaceful public protest that evolved into rioting casting an international spotlight on the city. The work not only acts as an archive of the demonstrations in response to Gray’s death, but also forces the viewer to ask hard questions of their society and of themselves. The images humanize the often misrepresented protesters of the burgeoning Black Lives Matter movement and complicate prevalent ideas about the "ghetto" as Allen strives to capture the life of his city and the people who live there.

“When most people think about the word ‘ghetto,’ they think of poverty, struggle, pain, violence, drugs,” said Allen. “But for me, the word ‘ghetto’ is so much more. When I look deep into my community, I see a beauty that is often overlooked and unappreciated.”

Devin Allen was selected as The Gordon Parks Foundation’s inaugural fellow in 2017 because his artistic practice and dedication to social justice reflects the passion, vision and humanity of Gordon Parks, who Allen names as a hero. Recently, Allen has turned his attention towards arming the youth of Baltimore with cameras, not guns as Parks similarly chose a camera as his “weapon of choice.” The mission of his *Through Their Eyes* project is to spread “hope and love through art” by training students from districts where arts education programs have been underfunded on how to use photography to express themselves. Allen provides students with cameras, donates his time holding youth photography workshops and organizes exhibitions of the students’ work. Allen is dedicated to empowering young people to tell their stories and the fellowship will support the continuation of his *Through Their Eyes* project.

An artist reception and book signing will be held the evening of Friday, September 15. Allen’s publication *A Beautiful Ghetto* (Haymarket Books, 2017) will be available for sale throughout the run of the exhibition.

For more information and press images please contact Tonya Bell and Melanie Blum at 212-691-2800 or GordonParksFoundation@SunshineSachs.com.

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Hours & Admission

Free and open to the public.
M-F: 10am - 4pm
Sat: 10am - 3pm
Sun: Closed

General Information

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

Social Media

Facebook: The Gordon Parks Foundation
Twitter: @GparksFound
Instagram: gordonparksfoundation

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About Devin Allen

Devin Allen was born and raised in West Baltimore. His photographs have also appeared in *New York Magazine*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Aperture*. His prints are in the permanent collections of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, and the Studio Museum in Harlem. He is the founder of Through Their Eyes, a youth photography educational program, and the recipient of the 2017 Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship.

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.

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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