

# THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION

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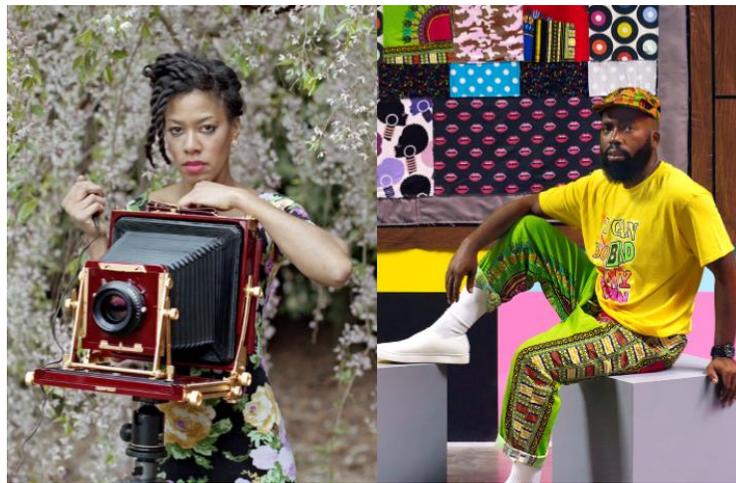
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## THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION MOUNTS “AMERICAN FAMILY: DERRICK ADAMS AND DEANA LAWSON”

An Exhibition by 2018 Fellowship Recipients

Exhibition to Open on October 19 and Remain on View through January 25



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - September 13, 2018 - Pleasantville, New York – The Gordon Parks Foundation** announced today that it will mount *American Family* – a special exhibition featuring the works of photographer **Deana Lawson** (Rochester, NY) and multidisciplinary artist **Derrick Adams** (Baltimore, MD) who were both selected as 2018 Gordon Parks Foundation Fellows earlier this year. In celebration of the exhibition, the Foundation will host an artists’ reception on **Friday, October 19** from **6:00 – 8:00 PM** that is free and open to the public. Both artists will attend and Lawson will also sign copies of her highly anticipated new book *Deana Lawson: An Aperture Monograph*, set to be published on Tuesday, September 25.

In *American Family*, the artists – who both draw inspiration from Parks - explore the complexity of the American character through familiar subjects with their own distinctive artistic approaches. On view concurrently with *American Family* will be a selection of Gordon Parks’ family portraits made during the 1950s in U.S. cities including Columbus, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; and Chicago, Illinois. Lawson notes, “Like Parks, my motivation is to give meaningful texture and complexity to images of global black culture.” Adams adds, “Parks’ influence...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.”

Lawson states that she envisions her photographic portraits of black persons as an “extended family” and an expression of “loving blackness,” in which black life is reclaimed by the visionary artist from negative forces and perceptions. In a recent interview appearing in the artist’s widely anticipated Aperture monograph *Deana Lawson*, she says, “I think about the capacity for human engagement, particularly in images and in pictures. I’m trying to conjure or direct the subject, in a way, to give me their full potential.”

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Adams, an artist who consistently works across disciplines, roots his practice in deconstructivist philosophies such as the fragmentation and manipulation of structure and surface, and the marriage of complex and improbable forms. His work examines the force of popular culture and the media on the perception and structure of the self-image. "It's natural for me to use my family as my subject," Adams says, "to create a framework for the work I do."

"Deana and Derrick are two wonderful contemporary artists that are creating narratives about the American scene in much the same way that Gordon Parks did throughout his life," said **Peter W. Kunhardt, Jr.**, Executive Director of The Gordon Parks Foundation. "They each take such bold approaches to exploring connections between people, and we're very excited to share their work as part of our fellowship program."

Now in its second year, The Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship Program supports artists working across a range of artistic disciplines—in the visual arts and beyond—by providing short-term grants, and an exhibition at the Foundation's exhibition space in Pleasantville, New York. Fellowships are awarded to artists working within themes of social justice and representation.

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

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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 to 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, GARAGE and Aperture. Lawson was included in the 2017 Whitney Biennial and recently had 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 on September 25, 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 alumnus 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.

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## 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.