

# Carpenter Center

# TIME IS NOW



John Simmons, *Window Writing*, Chicago, 1969. Pigment print.  
Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Fund for the Acquisition  
of Photographs, 2018.118. © John Simmons

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN JAMES BALDWIN'S AMERICA

September 13 – December 30, 2018  
Level 3, Sert Gallery

*Time is Now: Photography and Social Change in James Baldwin's America* is co-organized by the Carpenter Center and Harvard Art Museums, and curated by Makeda Best, Richard L. Menschel, Curator of Photography, Harvard Art Museums.

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts

Harvard University  
24 Quincy Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Gallery Hours Tue – Sun, 12 – 5 pm  
Free and Open to the Public

# for the Visual Arts

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once claimed that the artist's role is "to be a witness to the truth" and "to examine attitudes, to go beneath the surface . . ." In his widely acclaimed writing, Baldwin rigorously pursued and described a painful gap between America's realities and its ideals, or what he referred to as the "American illusion." Through works drawn from his own life, he articulated and charged his audiences with a communal mission. He linked the urgency of this quest and the nation's survival with the words "Time is now."

The belief in the transformative possibilities of photography and the call to witness similarly rallied, distinguished, infused, and propelled modern documentary photography in America in the twentieth century. The genre found its voice in the Depression era, and expanded its range and impact throughout the century. Baldwin himself interacted with these artists and learned from their historic images. Like Baldwin, they were conscious of their dual identities as citizens and critics and developed their personal creative visions through their illuminations of the everyday during a tumultuous period in the nation's history. Echoing the need for critical views of American life that inspired dynamic photographic production, Baldwin called on his readers to free themselves from the nation's myths and to "try to find out what is really happening here." These words, like a photograph of young people marching in the street or a scene at a prison, still resonate

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Curatorial Walk-through with  
Makeda Best: 6 pm

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Photography and Social Change  
in James Baldwin's America

*[I am a] witness to whence  
I came, where I am.  
Witness to what I've seen and  
the possibilities I think I see.  
—James Baldwin*

By the time of his death, essay collections such as *The Fire Next Time* (1963) and novels like *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968) had earned the prolific African American novelist, playwright, poet, and essayist James Baldwin (1924–1987) an international reputation as one of the most consequential American cultural critics. In one of his last interviews, James Baldwin declared himself a "witness to whence I came, where I am. Witness to what I've seen and the possibilities I think I see." The work of witnessing was a central theme in his life. He

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with audiences today. From Harlem to Oakland, to Chicago and Louisiana, this exhibition brings together an image of the American experience as seen by Baldwin and the visual artists of his time.

#### ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Time is Now: Photography and Social Change in James Baldwin's America* charts the nation's transformative cultural moment in the 20th century alongside the life of one of its most influential figures, interweaving the two narratives through the lens of the American documentary tradition. Photographers in the exhibition include Diane Arbus, Richard Balzer, Dawoud Bey, Peter Campbell, William Carter, Bruce Davidson, Roy DeCarava, Frank Espada, Robert Frank, Leonard Freed, Joanne Leonard, Ken Light, Danny Lyon, Marion Palfi, Ben Shahn, Steve Schapiro, John Simmons, Francis J. Sullivan, and Marion Post Wolcott.

All of the exhibition's photographs are drawn from the permanent collections of the Harvard Art Museums, a third of which were originally part of the Carpenter Center's renowned teaching collection of more than 10,000 prints, 40,000 negatives, and related materials, which were transferred to the museums in 2002. A unique resource for the study of fine art, social documentary, and

professional photography, the collection was established in the mid-1960s to consolidate some of Harvard University's holdings of significant historical photographs, and to support teaching of the history and aesthetic practice of photography by challenging existing paradigms about the meaning and function of photography through innovative exhibitions, publications, programs, and pedagogy.

The exhibition marks the continuation of an ongoing series of collaborations between the Harvard Art Museums and Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, and is timed to coincide with artist Teresita Fernández's Harvard Yard installation, *Autumn (...Nothing Personal)*, which references *Nothing Personal* (1964) by Baldwin and photographer Richard Avedon. Commissioned by the Harvard University Committee on the Arts (HUCA), *Autumn (...Nothing Personal)* is a site-specific work for Tercentenary Theatre that will unfold as both a physical site and as a space for public dialogue and performance.

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Thank you to Widgeon Point Charitable Foundation, Martha Tedeschi, Maureen

Donovan, Jennifer Allen, Lynette Roth, Sarah Kianovsky, Dana Greenidge, Jane Braun, Suzan Sengoz, Karoline Mansur, Kathryn Press, Narayan Khandekar, Penley Knipe, Charlotte Karney, Adam Baker, Laura Panadero, Jessica Ficken, Michael Dumas, Daron Manoogian, Jeff Stewart, Jennifer Aubin, Tara Metal, and Becca Voelcker.

#### PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Reception: Fall Exhibitions  
2018–19 Visual and Environmental  
Studies Visiting Faculty

*Time is Now: Photography  
and Social Change in James*

*Baldwin's America*

Thursday, September 13,  
5:30–7:30 pm

Level 3

Curatorial Walk-through with  
Makeda Best

Thursday, September 13, 6 pm  
Level 3

Curator Talk: Makeda Best and  
Barbara Norfleet with Dan Byers

Tuesday, October 2, 6 pm  
Level 3, Bookshop

Carpenter Center  
for the Visual Arts

Free and open to the public, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is the center for contemporary art and artists at Harvard University. Housed within Le Corbusier's only building in North America, the Carpenter Center was built in 1963 to accommodate the university's art and film studios alongside a dynamic exhibition program. Through exhibitions, public events, new commissions, publications, and residencies, the Carpenter Center is dedicated to artist-centered programming and building a vibrant community around contemporary art. This community is defined by an ethos of experimentation, diverse perspectives, and making connections across disciplines and fields. The Center's projects are enriched by the educational mission of a department of art and film education, and the cultural resources of a large research university.

Dan Byers, John R. and Barbara  
Robinson Family Director  
Anna Kovacs, Exhibitions  
Manager/Registrar  
Daisy Nam, Assistant Director  
Daisy Wong, Exhibition  
Production Assistant  
Jessica Caponigro and  
Kiyoto Koseki, Gallery and  
Bookshop Staff

Chad Kloepper, Design  
John Ewing, Copy Editor

Co-organized with:

Harvard  
Art Museums

Fogg Museum  
Busch-Reisinger Museum  
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

# Carpenter Center

*Time is Now:*

*Photography and Social Change in James Baldwin's America*

September 13–  
December 30, 2018

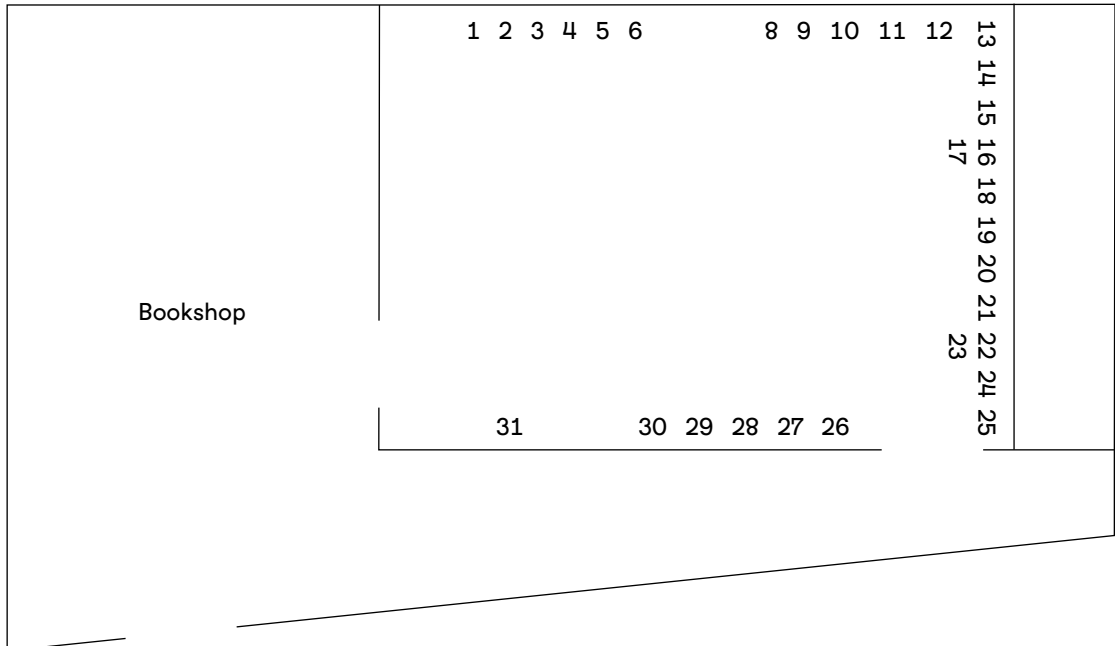
1.  
Ben Shahn (1898–1969),  
*Untitled (Sixth Avenue, New York City)*, 1932–34. Gelatin silver print, 6 ¼ × 9 ⅝ in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Bernarda Bryson Shahn © President and Fellows of Harvard College. P1970.2850

2.  
Marion Post Wolcott (1910–1990), *Cashiers Paying Off Cotton Pickers, Marcella Plantation, Mileston, Mississippi*, 1939. Gelatin silver print, 8 ⅞ × 11 ⅞ in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Gift of Wolcott Community Management. 2.2002.1572

3.  
Ben Shahn (1898–1969), *Creole girls, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana*, 1935. Gelatin silver print, 6 ⅞ × 9 ½ in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts. 2.2002.3092

4.  
Ben Shahn (1898–1969), *Untitled (medicine show, Huntingdon, Tennessee)*, 1935. Gelatin silver print, 7 ½ × 9 ¾ in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Bernarda Bryson Shahn © President and Fellows of Harvard College. P1970.1414

Sert Gallery, Level 3



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5. Robert Frank (b. 1924), *Trolley – New Orleans*, 1955–56. Gelatin silver print, 9  $\frac{1}{8}$  × 13  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts. 2.2002.750
6. Roy DeCarava (1919–2009), *Man coming up subway stairs*, 1952. Gelatin silver print, 13  $\frac{3}{4}$  × 10  $\frac{13}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, National Endowment for the Arts Grant © DeCarava Estate. P1982.87
7. Marion Palfi (1907–1978), *Untitled (from "There Is No More Time," Wife of the Lynch Victim)*, 1949. Gelatin silver print, 13  $\frac{9}{16}$  × 10  $\frac{9}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Purchase through the generosity of Melvin R. Seiden. P1982.194.15
8. Diane Arbus (1923–1971), *A young Negro boy, Washington Square Park, N.Y.C. [Black boy, Washington Square Park, N.Y.C.]*, 1965. Gelatin silver print, 20 × 16 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Fraenkel and Frish Brandt. 2017.310
9. Bruce Davidson (b. 1933), *East 100th Street Façade*, 1966–68. Gelatin silver print, 36 × 28  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Schneider/Erdman Printer's Proof Collection, partial gift, and partial purchase through the Margaret Fisher Fund. 2016.141
10. Francis J. Sullivan (Active 1940s–1950s), *Untitled (Lion's Minstrel Show)*, 1951. Gelatin silver print, 10  $\frac{1}{4}$  × 13  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, American Professional Photographers Collection. 4.2002.391
11. Danny Lyon (b. 1942), *Segregated drinking fountains in the county courthouse in Albany, Georgia*, 1962. Gelatin silver print, 12  $\frac{15}{16}$  × 8  $\frac{11}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Anonymous Gift © Danny Lyon/Magnum Photos. 2014.437
12. Leonard Freed (1929–2006), *New York City*, 1963. Gelatin silver print, 11  $\frac{13}{16}$  × 8 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Beinecke Fund. 2.2002.746
13. Peter Campbell (Active 1960s), *Washington, D.C. (The Righteousness Church of Christ)*, 1964. Gelatin silver print, 10  $\frac{11}{16}$  × 13  $\frac{7}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts. 2.2002.3242
14. John Simmons (b. 1950), *Man With A Pistol, Chicago*, 1965. Gelatin silver print, 14 × 9  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.117
15. William Carter (b. 1934), *Value*, 1961. Gelatin silver print, 9  $\frac{13}{16}$  × 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Gift of Pamela Prescott in memory of Robert Minturn Sedgwick II and Francis Minturn Sedgwick Jr. 2.2002.281

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16. Danny Lyon (b. 1942), *A street in Albany*, 1962. Gelatin silver print, 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  × 12  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Anonymous Gift © Danny Lyon/Magnum Photos. 2013.110 (above #17)
17. Danny Lyon (b. 1942), *The Line*, 1967–69. Gelatin silver print, 10  $\frac{7}{8}$  × 14 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Purchase through the generosity of The Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Marcus Foundation © Danny Lyon/Magnum Photos. P1972.23 (below # 16)
18. Bruce Davidson (b. 1933), *Untitled (Tennessee)*, 1962. Gelatin silver print, 6 × 9  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Gift of the artist. 2.2002.209
19. Steve Schapiro (b. 1934), *James Baldwin, Colored Entrance Only, New Orleans*, 1963. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 12  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Richard and Ronay Menschel Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.116
20. Frank Espada (1930–2014), *Mr. Johnson, seated; Blake Avenue, New York*, 1965. Gelatin silver print, 6 × 9 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Richard and Ronay Menschel Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.102
21. John Simmons (b. 1950), *Unite or Perish, Chicago*, 1968. Gelatin silver print, 9 × 14 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.119
22. John Simmons (b. 1950), *Window Writing, Chicago*, 1969. Gelatin silver print, 9  $\frac{1}{2}$  × 14 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.118 (above #23)
23. Joanne Leonard (b. 1940), *Untitled*, c. 1965. Gelatin silver print, 7  $\frac{7}{8}$  × 7  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Richard and Ronay Menschel Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.113 (below #22)
24. Danny Lyon (b. 1942), *March on Washington*, 1963 [SNCC members and friends defiantly gather to sing freedom songs], 1963. Gelatin silver print, 12  $\frac{15}{16}$  × 8  $\frac{11}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Anonymous Gift © Danny Lyon/Magnum Photos. 2013.110
25. Richard Balzer (1944–2017), *Untitled*, 1968. Gelatin silver print, 7  $\frac{15}{16}$  × 11  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Richard J. Balzer and Patricia S. Bellinger. 2018
26. Frank Espada (1930–2014), *Boy in the window of a beauty salon; East New York*, 1964. Gelatin silver print, 6  $\frac{1}{2}$  × 9  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Richard and Ronay Menschel Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.103
27. Bruce Davidson (b. 1933), *Untitled (Tennessee)*, 1962. Gelatin silver print, image 6 × 9  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Transfer from the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Gift of the artist. 2.2002.209

for the Visual Arts

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28.

Steve Schapiro (b. 1934), *Stop Police Killings, Selma*, 1965. Gelatin silver print, 19 × 13  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Richard and Ronay Menschel Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.115

29.

Leonard Freed (1929–2006), *Motorcycle passing buildings with Black Panther slogan, New Haven, CT, USA*, 1970. Gelatin silver print, 8 × 10 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Anonymous Gift © Leonard Freed/Magnum Photos. 2013.151

30.

Ken Light (b. 1951), *Race Wall, St. Louis, Missouri*, 1971. Gelatin silver print, 9 × 13  $\frac{7}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs. 2018.114

31.

Dawoud Bey (b. 1953), *Two Boys on Carrollburg*, 1989. Gelatin silver print, 22  $\frac{1}{6}$  × 18  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of John Erdman and Gary Schneider in honor of the appointment of Martha Tedeschi as the Director of the Harvard Art Museums. 2016.394