

**Gordon Parks Photographs from the Dean Collection to be Presented
at Harvard University Beginning April 26**

Featuring Selections from the Largest Private Collection of Photographs by Gordon Parks

Cambridge, MA – April 8, 2019 – A career-spanning exhibition of Gordon Parks’ photographs from the Dean Collection will debut this spring at the Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African and African American Art at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University. *Gordon Parks: Selections from the Dean Collection* will premiere a range of works from the collection of Kasseem Dean and Alicia Keys, who own the largest private holdings of works by Gordon Parks. Recognized as the most important African-American photographer of the 20th century, Parks represented his subjects—from the rural poor and black families living under segregation to fashion models and prominent cultural and political figures—with empathy and dignity, employing the arts to champion social change. On view April 26 through July 19, 2019, the exhibition is co-organized by the Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African and African American Art at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University and The Gordon Parks Foundation in cooperation with consulting curator, **Dr. Maurice Berger**.

“As the only art space at Harvard University that focuses exclusively on African and African American art, the Cooper Gallery is thrilled to serve as the site for the inaugural exhibition of the Dean Collection,” **Henry Louis Gates Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research**, said. “Gordon Parks was a major artist of the 20th century, whose work, with its journalistic precision and sublime artistry, shines a light on individuals and stories that were—and still are—too often hidden and overlooked.”

“The Deans have been important champions of the work of Gordon Parks, and this exhibition is an opportunity to share his work with a broader audience through the outstanding platform offered by Harvard University,” said **Peter W. Kunhardt Jr., Executive Director of The Gordon Parks Foundation**. “The exhibition additionally builds on the Foundation’s strong history of collaborative programming with leading institutions in the mounting of exhibitions, conferral of scholarships, and mounting of public programs that engage the public with Parks’ legacy.”

The Dean Collection’s holdings span Parks’ entire career—from his civil rights era images to fashion photography to portraits to lesser-known works. For several years, Keys and Dean have served as co-chairs of the annual Gordon Parks Foundation Awards Gala, and they announced the acquisition of 80 works by Gordon Parks at last year’s event. The exhibition will premiere a selection of highlights, including portraits of prominent civil rights leaders and cultural figures such as Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali, images of life in Jim Crow-era rural Alabama, fashion pictures, and documentary photographs, along with many lesser-known images.

The exhibition features a broad range of work, including portraits of eminent artists and public figures, such as Muhammad Ali, Langston Hughes, Alberto Giacometti, and Malcolm X; documentation of historic civil rights protests, including the 1963 March on Washington; intimate scenes of everyday life, from the daily rituals and challenges of a Harlem family to a 12-year-old boy struggling to survive in a ramshackle favela in the hills outside Rio de Janeiro; and a fascinating visual retelling of Ralph Ellison’s epochal novel, *Invisible Man*.

Berger, the consulting curator, writes in the exhibition's introductory text: "People need to see this type of greatness to inspire themselves,' Kasseem Dean has said of Parks' work. It is fitting that the Deans have embraced his photographs. In their own work—as musicians and producers—they exemplify the power of art to transform, motivate, and enlighten. *Gordon Parks: Selections from the Dean Collection* attests to the photographer's transformative role in 20th-century art, as a master storyteller who helped change the world, one commanding image at a time."

The exhibition coincides with the conferral of the inaugural [Gordon Parks Foundation Essay Prize](#) at Harvard University on April 26. With support from The Gordon Parks Foundation, Harvard's Office of the Arts, Department of History of Art and Architecture, and Department of African and African American Studies have launched this new initiative that builds on the Foundation's history of grantmaking to students. The exhibition also opens concurrently with ["Vision & Justice: A Convening"](#) on April 25 and 26 at Harvard University, and runs through July 19. Conceived by Sarah Lewis, Assistant Professor of History of Art and Architecture and African and African American Studies, and hosted by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard with the generous support of the Ford Foundation and cosponsored by the [Hutchins Center for African & African American Research](#), the [Harvard Art Museums](#), and the [American Repertory Theater](#), Vision & Justice is a two-day creative convening that will consider the role of the arts in understanding the nexus of art, race, and justice, with a focus on the African-American experience.

ABOUT THE DEAN COLLECTION

The Dean Collection—founded by Kasseem "Swizz Beatz" Dean and his wife Alicia Keys in 2014—is a contemporary family collection and cultural platform. The collection actively acquires, and commissions, work by contemporary visual artists such as Derrick Adams, Nina Chanel Abney, Jordan Casteel, Nick Cave, Arthur Jafa, KAWS, Deana Lawson, Ebony G. Patterson, Kehinde Wiley, and many others. The collection also includes the largest privately-owned body of work by Gordon Parks. The platform organizes artist support initiatives such as the No Commission art and music festival and TDC 20, both designed to fund artists' practices and projects. Dean sits on the board of trustees of the Brooklyn Museum, New York and the Americas Foundation of the Serpentine Galleries, London.

ABOUT DR. MAURICE BERGER

Maurice Berger is research professor and chief curator at the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. *Race Stories*, his monthly column for the Lens Section of the *New York Times*, explores the relationship of photography to concepts and social issues about race not usually covered in the mainstream media. His writings have appeared in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Aperture*, *National Geographic*, *Village Voice*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *Pen America*, *Wired*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. Berger's books include *White Lies: Race and the Myths of Whiteness* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999)—a finalist for Horace Mann Bond Book Award of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research, Harvard University—and *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Yale, 2010). He was awarded the 2018 Infinity Award in Critical Writing and Research from the International Center of Photography.

ABOUT THE ETHELBERT COOPER GALLERY OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ART AT THE HUTCHINS CENTER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Opened in the fall of 2014 and located in the heart of Harvard Square, the Ethelbert Cooper Gallery is the only exhibition space at Harvard dedicated exclusively to contemporary and historical installations of African and African American art. As part of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, the Cooper Gallery builds on the contributions of guest curators, artists, faculty, students, and visiting scholars to host a wide range of artist talks, symposia, and performances that bring visitors into contact with diverse art archives and cultural traditions spanning the African Diaspora.

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." With an exhibition space in Pleasantville, New York, The Gordon Parks Foundation presents focused presentations of Parks' photography, as well as the work of other artists influenced by his legacy.

Media Contacts:

Harvard University:

Nate Herpich

nate_herpich@harvard.edu

Gordon Parks Foundation:

Christina Ludgood / Barbara Escobar

Resnicow and Associates

212-671-5178 / 212-671-5174

cludgood@resnicow.com / bescobar@resnicow.com