

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 6, 2007

APERTURE GALLERY PRESENTS: TIME OF CHANGE BY BRUCE DAVIDSON AND THE BLACK PANTHERS: MAKING SENSE OF HISTORY BY STEPHEN SHAMES

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 17, 6:00–8:00 P.M. Exhibition On View: May 18-August 2, 2007

Bobby Seale

Selma Marcher

New York, NY (BlackNews.com) - Aperture Gallery is pleased to exhibit two seminal photographic documents of the civil rights movement. Magnum photographer Bruce Davidson spent the years 1961–1965 chronicling the early chapter of the movement that was defined by a philosophy of non-violent resistance to institutionalized American racism. Davidson's project chronicles five long years of struggle that made civil rights a national issue and led to the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965. Though such legislation represented an important step forward, it did not, however, have an immediate effect on the material conditions facing the African-American community, prompting two college students, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton to form the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, after Malcolm X was assassinated in 1966. The group would become emblematic of the Black Power movement that helped shape the tumultuous years of the late 1960s and early '70s. As the official photographer for the Panthers, Stephen Shames was allowed unprecedented access, enabling him to intimately document this dynamic but controversial organization from 1967 to 1973.

Time of Change: Photographs by Bruce Davidson

On May 25, 1961, Bruce Davidson joined a group of Freedom Riders traveling by bus from Montgomery, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi. The actions of the Riders tested federal laws permitting integrated interstate bus travel. These historic episodes, which ended in violence and arrests, marked the beginning of Davidson's exploration into the heart of the civil rights movement in the United States during the years 1961–1965. In 1962, Davidson received a Guggenheim Fellowship and continued documenting the era, including an early Malcolm X rally in Harlem, steel workers in Chicago, a Ku Klux Klan cross burning near Atlanta, migrant farm camps in South Carolina, cotton picking in Mississippi, protest demonstrations in Birmingham, and the heroic Selma march that led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was instrumental in changing the political power base in the segregated Southern states. Davidson's work on view in this exhibition includes intimate and revealing portraits of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Congressman John Lewis, and other leaders during those turbulent times. Davidson's lyrical images are both poignant and profound as they describe the mood that prevailed during the civil rights movement.

The Black Panthers: Making Sense of History: Photographs by Stephen Shames

In the midst of the civil rights movement, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the legendary Black Panther Party, in 1966, in Oakland, California. The Party, revered by some and vilified by others, burst onto the scene with a revolutionary agenda for social change and the empowerment of African-Americans. Its methods were controversial and polarizing, so much so that in 1969, FBI head J. Edgar Hoover described the organization as the country's greatest threat to internal security. In April 1967, Stephen Shames, a college student at the University of California, Berkeley, met the Panthers at a rally to end the war in Vietnam. He was invited to photograph them and continued to do so until 1973. His close friendship with the Panthers, and Seale in particular, gave Shames unusual access to the organization, allowing him to capture not only the public face of the Party-street demonstrations, protests, and militant posturing-but also unscripted behind-the-scenes moments, from private meetings held in the Party headquarters, to Bobby Seale at work on his mayoral campaign in Oakland. The immediacy and intimacy of Shames's photographs offer an uncommonly nuanced portrait of this dynamic social movement, during one of the most tumultuous periods in recent U.S. history.

Both series in the show are accompanied by critically acclaimed publications. *The Black Panthers*, photographs by Stephen Shames, foreword by Bobby Seale, essay by Charles E. Jones, was released by Aperture in October 2006 on the occasion of the Party's fortieth-anniversary reunion in Oakland, California. *Time of Change: Civil Rights Photographs 1961 – 1965*, photographs by Bruce Davidson, foreword by John Lewis, essay by Deborah Willis, was published by St. Anne's Press in October 2002.

Bruce Davidson is a major figure in modern photography, who has created compelling documentary work for over forty years. Born in 1933, he began taking photographs at the age of ten. After military service in 1957 he worked as a freelance photographer for *Life*, and in 1958 he became a member of Magnum Photos. Davidson continued to photograph extensively from 1958 to 1965, creating such bodies of work as *The Dwarf*, *Brooklyn Gang*, *Subway*, *East 100th Street*, and *The Civil Rights Movement*. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1962 to document youth in the South during the civil rights movement, and in 1966 was awarded the first grant for photography from the National Endowment for the Arts. Davidson's work has been shown at many of the world's leading museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; International Center of Photography, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and Parco Gallery, Tokyo. He continues to work as an editorial and documentary photographer and his work appears regularly in publications all over the globe. Aperture has published three monographs on the work of Davidson: *Central Park*, *Portraits*, and *Subway*.

Stephen Shames is an award-winning photographer and social activist whose photographs on social issues have been published in numerous major publications and are in the permanent collections of the International Center of Photography, New York; National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego; University of California's Bancroft Library, Berkeley; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He has received awards from Kodak (Crystal Eagle for Impact in Photojournalism), World Hunger Year, Leica, International Center of Photography, and the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Foundation. Shames is one of ten photographers featured in Tipper Gore's book on homelessness, *The Way Home*. He has testified on the issue of child poverty to the U.S. Senate and was a featured speaker at American Bar Association and Children's Defense Fund national conferences. The Ford, Charles Stewart Mott, Robert Wood Johnson, and Annie E. Casey Foundations have underwritten his work. PBS named Lewis Hine, Marion Post Wolcott, and Stephen Shames as photographers whose work promotes social change. Shames's other publications with Aperture are: *Pursuing the Dream*, *Outside the Dream*, and *Empower Zone*. He is represented by Polaris Images, and the Stephen Kasher Gallery, New York.

Related Events:

The Black Panthers: Vintage Prints by Stephen Shames Exhibition

Opening Reception and Book Signing with the Artist:

Tuesday, April 10, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Exhibition on View:

April 11- May 27, 2007

Steven Kasher Gallery

521 West 23rd Street, New York

Steven Kasher Gallery will present a remarkable collection of over fifty never-before-exhibited vintage prints from 1967 to 1973, exhibited alongside new limited-edition photographs. All prints are available for purchase.

For more information, contact: info@stevekasher.com

Bruce Davidson Talk and Book Signing

Tuesday, May 22, 6:30 p.m.

Aperture Gallery

Bruce Davidson will discuss his illustrious career and work on view in the exhibition at Aperture Gallery.

Aperture Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (except opening nights/holidays)

Aperture Gallery Address: 547 West 27th Street, 4th floor, New York, N.Y. 10001; 212-505-5555

Aperture - a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to advancing photography in all its forms - was founded in 1952 by six gifted individuals: photographers Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, Barbara Morgan, and Minor White; historian Beaumont Newhall; and writer/curator Nancy Newhall. With scant resources, these visionary artists created a new periodical, *Aperture* magazine, to serve photographers and photography enthusiasts worldwide. As the medium flourished, so too did Aperture Foundation, expanding to include the subsequent publication of books; limited-edition photographs and portfolios; artist lectures and symposia; and a traveling exhibitions program that since its inception has presented over one hundred exhibitions at major museums and cultural

institutions throughout the United States and abroad.

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