PRESS RELEASE

Stephen Shames / Vintages

Exhibition 29.01 – 07.03.2020

Text by Florence Pillet

For this first exhibition of the year, the Esther Woerdehoff Gallery is proud to present a selection of exclusive vintage prints by Stephen Shames, the renowned documentary photographer born in 1947.

The young people that Stephen Shames photographed in the late 1970s, in the finest tradition of American documentary photography, were born poor in America, neglected by adults and institutions, plagued by the violence of society. The social and political commitment of Stephen Shames, who began his career in the 1960s as a photographer for the Black Panther Party, is clearly seen in these reportages, often shot over several years.

Stephen Shames captures American youth through the prism of poverty and aims to be the voice of those who are not heard. Through his photographs and their diffusion, particularly in the form of illustrated essay books, he insists on the idea that poverty is the source to all social problems and criminal behaviour. Thrown into adulthood, unprotected, the extremely young people that Shames photographs show this, without any pathos or staging. The photographer stands beside them and records the dramatic density of their daily lives, in black and white photographs full of emotion and strength.

For any information and request for visuals, please contact Florence Pillet - florence@ewgalerie.com
Press images

Stephen Shames, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: young teenagers wrestle in the grass at a park, 1975
Vintage print, signed
15,5 x 22,5 cm

Stephen Shames, New York, USA: Girls apply make-up, 1976
Vintage print, signed
15,5 x 23,5 cm

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Obligatory mention: © Stephen Shames, Courtesy Galerie Esther Woerdehoff
Press images

Stephen Shames, *Chicago, Illinois, USA: African-American boy smokes a cigarette on the south side, 1972*
Vintage print, signed
24,9x 20 cm

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Obligatory mention: © Stephen Shames, Courtesy Galerie Esther Woerdehoff
BIOGRAPHY

Artist

**Stephen Shames**

Born in 1947 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Stephen Shames was educated at Berkeley University (CA). At the age of 19, during a anti-Vietnam War protest in San Francisco, he met the founders of the Black Panthers movement. He began to photograph the movement, in all its aspects, and was its main chronicler for 7 years. As a photojournalist, Stephen Shames sees photography as a weapon of liberation, as a means of fighting for justice and social equity. During his long career, he has documented the lives of the poorest, the most neglected populations and young people trying to live and grow up in the harshest, most hostile environments. In his own words, his approach is to give voice to those who are denied it. In particular, he addresses child poverty and racial or prison matters to draw attention to social issues in the United States, just as photographers Lewis Hine, Jacob Riis, or Marion Post Wolcott did before him. Stephen Shames has received numerous awards for his work and his prints are in the largest public collections. In 2015, the Nicéphore Niépce Museum offered a retrospective exhibition of his work allowing this great photographer to be better known to the European public.

Solo Exhibitions

2020
*Stephen Shames & Karlheinz Weinberger*, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Paris

2019
*Hey! What’s Going On? Black Panther 10-Point Portfolio with Bobby Seale*, Fondation Manuel Rivera-Ortiz, Arles, France
*Black Panther Party 10 Point Portfolio with Bobby Seale*, Photo Doc Gallery, Paris
*Black Panther Party 10 Point Portfolio with Bobby Seale*, Photo Doc Fair, Paris
*Red Power on Alcatraz: Perspectives from 50 Years Later*, National Park Service & Oakland Public Library, USA

2018
*Living Unfinished Business*, Slavery & Justice Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA
*Power to the People*, Kyotographie International Photo Festival, Kyoto, Japan
*Power to the People*, Maison Folie Moulins, Lille, France
*Stephen Shames: Une Rétrospective*, La Chambre, Strasbourg, France
*Conversation: Stephen Shames & Trish Myrtha*, Photo Doc Gallery, Paris
*Conversation: Stephen Shames & Trish Myrtha*, Photo Doc Fair, Paris

2017
*The Black Panthers*, Steven Kasher Gallery at Paris Photo, Paris
*Stephen Shames: Une Rétrospective*, Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône, France
*Stephen Shames: Une Rétrospective*, Centre Culturel Valery-Larbaud, Vichy, France
*Stephen Shames: Une Rétrospective*, Maison de la photographie Robert Doisneau, Gentilly, France
2016
*Power to the People: The World of the Black Panthers*, Steven Kasher Gallery, New York, USA
*Power to the People: The World of the Black Panthers*, Graduate School of Journalism Gallery, University of California at Berkeley, USA

2015
*Bronx Boys*, Herter Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA

2014
*Bronx Boys*, Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

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### Group Exhibitions (selection)

2019
*Incarnations: African Art as Philosophy*, Bozar/Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels, Belgium
*Apollo’s Muse: The Moon in the Age of Photography*, Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA
*Whose University: TWLF Strike, Ethnic Studies Library*, University of California, Berkeley, USA
*Elements of Vogue: A Case Study on Radical Performance*, CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid, Spain
*Elements of Vogue: A Case Study on Radical Performance*, Chop Museum, national University of Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico
*History of Health & Disease in Brooklyn*, Brooklyn Historical Society, USA

2018
*Magnum / Aperture Print Sale*, Aperture, New York, USA
*Way Bay 2: Group Show*, UC Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA, USA

2017
*Black Power 50*, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, USA
*HIP HOP : un âge d’or 1970–1995…*, Musée d’Art Contemporain, Marseille, France
*Resistors: 50 Years of Social Movement Photography*, Berkeley Art Museum, USA

2016
*Black Power*, The African-American Museum Smithsonian, Washington DC, USA
*All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50*, The Oakland Museum of California

2015
*Object Power*, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian, Washington DC, USA
*Aperture: Photographs*, UBS Bank, New York, USA

2014
*Glenn Ligon: Encounters & Collisions*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK in partnership with Tate Liverpool, United Kingdom
*Heated Words [Bronx Boys photos]*, House of Vans, London, United Kingdom

2013
*American Cool*, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian, Washington DC, USA
*Black Power*, National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, USA
Publications

Stephen Shames: Une Rétrospective (Red Eye, 2017)
Power to the People: The World of the Black Panthers by Stephen Shames and Bobby Seale (Abrams, 2016)
Bronx Boys (University of Texas Press, 2014)
Facing Race: 21st Century Americans (Moravian College, 2008). Essays by Gregory Howard Williams, Marian Wright Edelman, Alex Kotlowitz, Anne Dutlinger
Bronx Boys (FotoEvidence, 2011), an electronic photo book
Free to Grow (Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, 2003) Text: Peter Meyer

Awards

Kodak Crystal Eagle Award for Excellence in Photojournalism
World Hunger Year
World Press
Leica Medal of Excellence in Photojournalism (3 times)
Luis Valtuña Humanitarian
International Center of Photography (Special Recognition)
Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards (2nd & 3rd)
New York Art Director’s Club, (Gold)
Gordon Parks (twice)
Rochester Film Festival
W. Eugene Smith Grant finalist (twice)
Open Society finalist
Canon Photo Essay - Judges Special Recognition
Society of Newspaper Design (Silver, 2 times)
Society of Publication Designers – Annual
American Photography – Annual (2 times)
Communication Arts – Photography Annual (2 times)
FotoFest Publishing Conference – 2nd Place
NPPA, Pictures of the Year (many times)
NPPA • Newspaper Photog of the Year – Award of Excellence
The Villers Foundation
American Association of Political Consultants – Pollie Award (silver) for NYC
DADS campaign

Public Collections

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)
Metropolitan Museum
African-American Museum of History & Culture | Smithsonian
National Portrait Gallery | Smithsonian
International Center of Photography, New York
The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington
Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Nationa Civil Rights Museum, Memphia, TN
San Jose Art Museum
The Oakland Museum of CA
Philadelphia Museum of Art
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin
Fondation Sindika Dokolo, Luanda, Angola
Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Exeter Academy, Andover, MA
University Art Museum, Berkeley
Baruch College, New York
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richomnd, VA
Elton John Foundation
The Ford Foundation, New York
di Rosa, Napa, California
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
Family Support America, Chicago
Education Trust, Washington
Children's Defense Fund, Washington
The Honickman Foundation, Philadelphia
World Hunger Year, New York
Chinagraph, New York
The Joe Baio Collection, New York