

:: For Immediate Release::

*SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES ANNOUNCES 'BLACK SUBJECTS IN MODERN MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHY'; OPENS JANUARY 16, 2020*



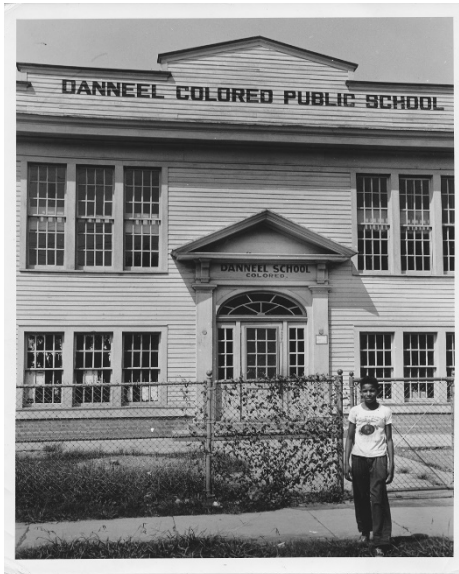
Louis B. Schlivek, *Grand Central Bookstore*, circa 1956. George R. Rinhart Collection.

Syracuse, NY---The Syracuse University Art Galleries is pleased to announce *Black Subjects in Modern Media Photography: Works from the George R. Rinhart Collection*, opening January 16. This exhibition of 145 photographic images includes work by news photographers working for Underwood & Underwood Publishers, as well prints by noted artists Henri Leighton, Herbert Gehr, Charlotte Brooks, and Carl Van Vechten. On loan from the extensive George R. Rinhart Collection, one of the largest private collections in the nation, and curated by Joan Bryant, associate professor in African American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University, this presentation offers a glimpse of the complexity and paradoxes of Black visual modernity. The prints on display welcome viewers to consider how Black subjects were represented to mass audiences through media such as newspapers, magazines, documentary projects, libraries, and advertising.

As stated by Bryant, “The exhibition is an occasion to consider what counts as a modern Black image in the first half of the twentieth century— period marked by state-sponsored White supremacy, a growing push for Black self-determination and equality, and technological changes that expanded the accessibility of photographs... I think the assortment points to divergent social currents that shaped American visual culture.” A fully illustrated catalog with a scholarly essay by Bryant will accompany the exhibition, available in the galleries in February 2020.

The exhibition will run Thurs., January 16 through Fri., March 13, 2020 in the Shaffer Art Building. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Sunday, 11 a.m.—4:30 p.m.; and Thursdays 11 a.m. — 8 p.m. Closed university holidays and Mondays. Bryant will present a lecture on the exhibition at 5:00pm in Slocum Hall on Thurs, January 30. The lecture will be followed by an opening reception, co-sponsored by the Humanities Center in the College of Arts and Sciences, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the SU Art Galleries. Patrons are welcome to view the exhibition until the gallery closes at 8p.m. The lecture and reception are free and open to all. We encourage visitors to bring a donation of canned or dry goods to the events, to be donated to the Hendricks Chapel Food Pantry.

## Exhibition Overview



James Kissinger, *Segregation in Schools, New Orleans*, circa 1955. George R. Reinhart Collection

Photography's technological advances converged with the expansion of Jim Crow. The racial discrimination that structured this system excluded Black photographers from most media enterprises. Yet, their work was key to increased variety in modern portrayals of Black life. Using Black-operated portrait studios, periodicals, and institutions, they produced images that reflected and promoted self-definition and self-determination—hallmarks of the early twentieth-century's "New Negro." Against the backdrop of an expanding Black-controlled visual culture, White media establishments increasingly disseminated pictures that showed Blackness as an ordinary instance of humanity even as they sustained a popular appetite for racist imagery. The circulation of material that catered to the tastes, bigotries, and political agendas of disparate viewers thus marked the photographic landscape with a broad assortment of Black subjects.

Pictures featuring varied themes—Cities, Politics, Work, Kinship, School, Religion, Leisure, Childhood, Colonies, and Portraits - welcome viewers to consider how people, places, and practices were presented as Black subjects to mass audiences via newspapers, magazines, documentary projects, libraries, and advertising. They raise several questions that engage a photograph's capacity to convey meaning and invite new interpretations of what it meant to create, be, and see a modern Black subject.

Please note, this exhibition includes text and photographs that document inequality, racism, and violence. Experiencing such material might be challenging for some viewers. We present it with the aim of promoting historically-informed considerations of social relations and justice.

## About the Curator

Joan Bryant, Ph.D. is an associate professor and undergraduate studies director of African American studies in the College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University. Bryant is the author of the forthcoming book *Reluctant Race Men: Black Opposition to the Practice of Race in 19th-Century America* (Oxford University Press). Bryant previously co-curated an exhibit called "Black Utopias" in 2015 for Bird library at Syracuse University. She is a scholar in American religious studies and researches the relation between race and religion in modern America.

## Related Programs

All programs are free and open to all. For parking information, visit [parking.syr.edu](http://parking.syr.edu)

### Keynote Lecture

*When I has my likeness took: Black Subjects & the Modernization of Photography*

Thurs, January 30 at 5 p.m.

214 Slocum Hall

Join us for a keynote talk with Joan Bryant, associate professor in the African American Department at Syracuse University, will explore issues in the SUArt exhibition, *Black Subjects in Modern Media Photography: Works from the George R. Reinhart Collection*. Presented in collaboration with the Syracuse University Humanities Center in the College of Arts and Sciences, organizer of the 2020 Syracuse Symposium on Silence

### Gallery Reception

Thurs, January 30, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

### Lunchtime Lecture

*Black Subjects in Modern Media Photography*

Wed, February 19, 12:15 p.m.

Join the curator of the exhibition, Joan Bryant, Ph.D, for a gallery talk.

### Film Program

*Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People*

Sun., March 1, 2 p.m.

Shemin Auditorium, Shaffer Art Building

Join us for a screening of *Through a Lens Darkly*, the first documentary to explore the role of photography in shaping the identity, aspirations, and social emergence of African Americans from slavery to the present.

## About SUArt Galleries

The Syracuse University Art Galleries (SUArt Galleries) is the campus art museum of Syracuse University and is part of SU's Coalition of Museum and Art Centers. It strives to be a place of rigorous interdisciplinary research, creative thinking, and mindfulness, as well as an inclusive space that serves as a forum for a broad range of discussions that bring people together, uniting the wider community with students, faculty, and staff. The museum presents up to 20 exhibitions annually, scores of public programs, and an active schedule of class visits. It also manages the Palitz Gallery at the Syracuse University Lubin House in NYC where up to 6 exhibitions a year are presented. The museum's permanent collection of 45,000 artworks from 3500 BCE to present day includes important holdings from many areas of the world. Over the past 35 years, the museum has shared much of its art collection with peer institutions across the country through its traveling exhibition program.

Please note no photography is allowed in the temporary exhibitions. Complete information and related programming is available by visiting the official exhibition website at <http://galleries.syr.edu/>. Press material, including exhibition press release, checklist, and press ready images are available for download directly from our website at <http://galleries.syr.edu/media-2/press-materials/>

## **SUArt Galleries Visitor Information**

### **Address**

1st Floor, Shaffer Art Building  
Syracuse, NY 13244

### **Academic Year Hours**

Tuesday 11 a.m.—4:30 p.m

Wednesday 11 a.m.—4:30 p.m

Thursday 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Friday 11 a.m.—4:30 p.m

Saturday 11 a.m.—4:30 p.m

Sunday 11 a.m.—4:30 p.m

### **Information**

[galleries.syr.edu](http://galleries.syr.edu) | [suart@syr.edu](mailto:suart@syr.edu) | (315) 443-4097

### **Social Media**

[Facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/SUArtGalleries) [Twitter.com/](https://twitter.com/SUArtGalleries) [Instagram.com/#SUArtGalleries](https://www.instagram.com/SUArtGalleries)

**MEDIA CONTACT:** For additional information or images, please contact

Emily Dittman, Associate Director. Tel: 315.443.4097, [ekdittma@syr.edu](mailto:ekdittma@syr.edu) | [galleries.syr.edu](http://galleries.syr.edu)