

KEITH DE LELLIS
GALLERY

FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

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LIGHT & DARK

PORTRAITS OF DISTINGUISHED AFRICAN AMERICANS

FEBRUARY 7 – MARCH 21, 2019

Keith de Lellis Gallery presents a group exhibition of portraits depicting distinguished African American figures of the 20th century. Included are famed musicians, actors, writers, boxers, and more. These artists were photographed by noted documentary and portrait photographers, including Flip Schulke, Chuck Stewart, Carl Van Vechten, and David Attie.

While some photographs are immediately recognizable, such as Schulke's *Ali Underwater*, others may be unfamiliar. Lesser-known photographs of Sammy Davis Jr., Booker T. Washington, and other figures offer a new perspective on these familiar faces. The group of studio and environmental portraits range from formally composed sittings to dynamic action shots. Bob Willoughby's image of Lionel Hampton mid-concert captures the energy and joy of the performer fully absorbed in his music. An equal energy emits from a passionate scene in which Martin Luther King Jr. delivers a sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church, photographed by Flip Schulke. Conversely, Chuck Stewart's studio portrait of Duke Ellington shows a calm yet playful subject wearing his heart (in the form of cufflinks) on his sleeve.

The images also dramatically range in scale, from Van Vechten's intimate postcards to Barboza's striking exhibition prints. A small Underwood portrait of Booker T. Washington invites the viewer to look closely at the studious man at work, the format suggesting a cabinet card of sorts. Barboza's large, close-cropped portraits of Roberta Flack and Grace Jones give the observer the opportunity to focus on the details of their dimly-lit faces.

The photographers share an array of personalities and experiences through these portraits. The dignity, elegance, and commitment to their craft of those pictured is palpable in these exceptional photographs.

Light & Dark will be on view at the Keith de Lellis Gallery through March 21, 2019.