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MASTER CLASS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY FOUR AFRICAN AMERICAN PHOTO JOURNALISTS
FEBRUARY 13TH TO MARCH 29TH

Keith de Lellis is pleased to present an exhibition of four distinguished African-American photographers who professionalized their passion for the photographic arts by establishing careers as masters in the world of photojournalism. **Eli Reed, Coreen Simpson, Ozier Muhammad and Beuford Smith** all brilliant and savvy picture makers, are shown here documenting the world around them in images of historical and cultural significance.

The exhibition consists of a sampling of about a dozen images per artist, each revealing a distinctive vision and a keen ability to capture the moments that tells us so much not only about their subject but about the picture maker themselves.

Eli Reed has the distinction of being the first black photographer to become a member of the elite photojournalists collective Magnum Photos along with its' prestigious international roster of some of the finest photographers in the field. Reed's images are a study of the human condition. While many focus on the lives of people of color in all strata of society from the impoverished to the gifted and celebrated, he treats all his subjects with dignity and deference. Reed's 1994 canny portrait of Gordon Parks and his daughter Toni taken in London, reveal their faces etched with what feels like a complicated and perhaps difficult moment in a father-daughter relationship.

Coreen Simpson is the rare African-American female artist whose portraiture whether it be her powerful studio work or on location pictures in art galleries, performance venues or celebrity photo ops, convey her empathy for her subjects. A touching 1989 photograph of Oprah Winfrey at one such photo-op where Winfrey has completely fixed her gaze on Coreen's camera ignoring the gaggle of other photographers. It's that moment that makes one wish they could read Oprah's mind as she is confronted by another professional black woman, perhaps seeing herself in Coreen's lens.

Ozier Muhammad, a Chicago born Pulitzer Prize winning photographer, has photographed some of the most historical moments of the past 30 years including hunger in Africa, Nelson Mandela's Election and the Obama Campaign for the Presidency. We chose to exhibit some of Ozier's earlier work for its prototypical purity and clean lines that reveal an honesty and authenticity that are the hallmark of his later work. His portrait of Chicago's Mayor Richard J. Daley at Congressman's Funeral in 1973, reveals a fully formed artist who knew how to get a picture and get it right from his earliest efforts as a photojournalist.

Beuford Smith is a natural born photographer, and powerhouse in the world of African American Photography. His accomplishments include President and founding member of Kamoinge, founding editor of the Black Photographers Annual, Photography exhibition curator and owner of the Cesaire picture agency. His contribution to the exhibition is a suite of photographs taken the day after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. This tragic and historic event moved Smith to deal with the shock and pain of losing such a pivotal figure in the civil rights movement by grabbing his camera and preserving the fleeting moments that must have been achingly sad on that day.

The exhibition will be on view through March 29th.