



**INTERNATIONAL
CENTER OF
PHOTOGRAPHY**
MEDIA RELEASE

CONTACT

Communications Team
212.857.0045
info@icp.org



ICP ANNOUNCES MAJOR ACQUISITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR PHOTOGRAPHY

Eugene Roquemore,
*Photography
Class Taught by
Curtis Humphrey
at Wiley College,
Marshall, Texas,
ca. 1947.* Courtesy
Documentary
Arts Collection/
International Center
of Photography.

NEW YORK, NY (SEPTEMBER 9, 2015)

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is pleased to announce a major acquisition of African American vernacular photography through a partnership with the non-profit organization Documentary Arts. The 60,000-piece Texas African American Photography Archive (TAAP) is the centerpiece of more than 100,000 photographs, films, videos, audio recordings, and new media works donated to the ICP by Alan Govenar, founder of Documentary Arts. The TAAP Archive focuses primarily on the work of 20th-century African American community photographers active in rural and urban Texas.

“This extraordinary gift will make a significant impact on ICP’s collection and the contexts and histories it contains,” said ICP Executive Director Mark Lubell. “We thank Alan Govenar for partnering with ICP to make the works in the TAAP Archive accessible to new audiences and for his lifelong support of documentary practice.”

The TAAP Archive, founded by Govenar and Kaleta Doolin, traces the growth and development of vernacular and community photography among African Americans in Texas, including Alonzo Jordan, Marion Butts, Louise Martin, Elnora Frazier, Juanita Williams, and Benny Joseph, among others. The material in the archive provides a rich historical record of protests, political demonstrations, and social gatherings, such as weddings, funerals, Juneteenth parades, church services, and high school and college graduations. A selection of images from the Archive is accessible on ICP’s website at <http://www.icp.org/browse/archive/collections/documentary-arts-selections>.

This acquisition will join ICP’s substantial photography collection, which is located in a state-of-the-art 15,000-square foot facility at Mana Contemporary Arts Center. The move to Mana earlier this year was undertaken to allow for the acquisition of additional large archives, such as TAAP, and their use in inventive digital projects in ICP’s media lab.

1114 6th Ave.
New York, NY
10036

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The collection gift is one component of an exciting partnership with Documentary Arts, a Dallas-based nonprofit group founded in 1985 by Govenar, which also includes exhibitions drawn from the Collections and the inauguration of the Documentary Arts Fellowship which supports the careers of promising documentarians.

An exhibition of work from the TAAP Collection will be on view in the ICP gallery at Mana Contemporary from October 18, 2015 to January 10, 2016. *The Early Years of Rhythm and Blues: Photographs by Benny Joseph from the Documentary Arts Collection* consists of black and white prints by Houston photographer Benny Joseph (b. 1924) that trace the rise of rhythm and blues music in the 1950s and 1960s. It features portraits of such celebrated performers as B.B. King, Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins, and Junior Parker, as well as non-R&B singers Mahalia Jackson and Della Reese. The exhibition also includes Joseph’s striking portraits of prominent African Americans of the same era, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, and Barbara Jordan.

The Documentary Arts Fellowship will enable students in ICP’s full-time programs (Documentary Photography and Photojournalism, General Studies, New Media Narratives, ICP-Bard MFA) to deepen their photography practice, while supporting Documentary Arts’ goal to present new perspectives on history and culture. Documentary Arts Fellows, chosen annually, will undertake a personal photography project that explores the social evolution of an urban area. The Documentary Arts Fellowship is supported in part by the Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation and the Communities Foundation of Texas.

ABOUT ALAN GOVENAR AND DOCUMENTARY ARTS

Founded in 1985 by Alan Govenar to present new perspectives on historical issues and diverse cultures, Documentary Arts, Inc. is a non-profit organization based in Dallas, Texas, and New York City. Documentary Arts’ collaborations with major institutions—including the National Endowment for the Arts, African American Museum (Dallas), FARO (Brussels), Maison des Cultures du Monde (Paris), and UNESCO (Nairobi)—have highlighted little-known practitioners of cultural forms via photography, films and videos, audio recordings, oral histories, exhibitions, public programs, new technologies, and collections of material culture.

Alan Govenar is an award-winning writer, folklorist, photographer, and filmmaker. He is the author of 27 books, including *Living Texas Blues* (1985), *Portraits of Community: African American Photography in Texas* (1996), *Untold Glory: African Americans in Pursuit of Freedom, Opportunity, and Achievement* (2007), *Jasper, Texas: The Community Photographs of Alonzo Jordan* (2011), and *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas* (2013). Govenar has also produced and directed numerous films in association with NOVA, PBS, and La Sept/ARTE. His most recent feature-length documentaries, *The Beat Hotel*, *Master Qi and the Monkey King*, and *You Don’t Need Feet To Dance* are distributed by First Run Features. Learn more at www.documentaryarts.org.

ABOUT ICP

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is the world’s leading institution dedicated to the practice and understanding of photography and the reproduced image in all its forms. Through our exhibitions, educational programs, and community outreach, we offer an open forum for dialogue about the role images play in our culture. Since our founding, we have presented more than 700 exhibitions and offered thousands of classes, providing instruction at every level. ICP is a center where photographers and artists, students and scholars can create and interpret the world of the image within our comprehensive educational and archival facilities. Visit www.icp.org for more information.



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