



Sarah Lewis, Sarah Meister, and Tyler Mitchell, New York, 2025
All photographs by Skylar Searing/BFA.com

2025 Aperture Gala Honors Sarah Lewis, Tyler Mitchell, and Vision & Justice

Celebration on October 29 Benefited Aperture's Photography Publishing Program, in Anticipation of New Home in New York City, with over \$1 Million Raised

NEW YORK, NY—October 30, 2025—On Wednesday, October 29, Aperture celebrated its 2025 Gala in the Appel Room of Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. For over seven decades, Aperture has played a central role in shaping the conversation around photography through its nonprofit publishing and public programs, and the annual benefit raises vital funds that help sustain and advance Aperture's established history of supporting artists and creating landmark publications. This year, the gala raised over \$1 million and also marked a fundamental moment for Aperture, just ahead of the forthcoming move to a permanent new home on the Upper West Side. The joyful evening honored Sarah Lewis, Tyler Mitchell, and Vision & Justice in recognition of their collective and dynamic impact on culture through their influential art, scholarship, and advocacy.

Gala Cochairs were Dr. Kathryn Beal, Dawoud Bey, Agnes Gund and Catherine Gund, Judy and Leonard Lauder, Jon Stryker and Slobodan Randjelović, Hank Willis Thomas, Olivia Walton, and Deborah Willis. To introduce the esteemed honorees, Deborah Willis saluted artist Tyler Mitchell, and Dr. Chelsea Clinton, Vice Chair of the Clinton Foundation, presented Sarah Lewis, Art and Cultural Historian and Founder of Vision & Justice.

Complementing the inspiring program and the spirit of the venue, the Wynton Marsalis Quartet delighted guests with a surprise musical performance. A live auction animated by Sarah Krueger, Head of Photographs at Phillips, featured prints by five major artists who have been central to Aperture's past and present: Kwame Brathwaite, Lee Friedlander, Lyle Ashton Harris, Wendy Red Star, and Carrie Mae Weems. Additional funding was raised through bidding on two exclusive works of art: a limited-edition copy of Tyler Mitchell's book *Wish This Was Real* (Aperture, 2025), bound with custom metallic covers and posters, and a specially commissioned photograph of Aperture's new home at 380 Columbus Avenue by acclaimed photographer Gail Albert Halaban, known for her luminous images of cities at night.

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Guests were addressed by New York City Council Member Gale A. Brewer, with a rally of appreciation for Aperture's work and excitement around the 2026 move to the Upper West Side. Joining the festivities were a host of artists who have collaborated with Aperture on publications and programs in support of their work over the years, including David Alekhuogie, Tina

Barney, Dawoud Bey, McKayla Chandler, Awol Erizku, Ethan James Green, Lyle Ashton Harris, Balarama Heller, Rashid Johnson, Susan Meiselas, Anastasia Samoylova, Antwaun Sargent, Coreen Simpson, Ming Smith, Wendy Red Star, Alex Webb, Rebecca Norris Webb, and Deborah Willis.

About the Honorees

Sarah Lewis is the founder of Vision & Justice and the John L. Loeb Associate Professor of the Humanities and associate professor of African and African American studies at Harvard University. She is the author of *The Unseen Truth: When Race Changed Sight in America* (Harvard University Press), winner of the 2025 American Book Award and a finalist for the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, the bestseller *The Rise: Creativity, the Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery* (Simon & Schuster), and the forthcoming *Vision & Justice* (One World/Random House). Lewis is the editor of the award-winning volumes “Vision & Justice” by *Aperture* magazine and the anthology on the work of Carrie Mae Weems (MIT Press). She is the organizer of the landmark Vision & Justice Convenings, and coeditor of the Vision & Justice Book Series, launched in partnership with Aperture. Her awards and recognition include an honorary degree from Pratt Institute, the Infinity Award, the Walter Channing Cabot Fellowship, the Andrew Carnegie Fellowship, a Cullman Fellowship, the Freedom Scholar Award (ASALH), the Arthur Danto/American Society for Aesthetics Prize from the American Philosophical Association, and the Photography Network Book Prize. Her writing has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, and *The New York Review of Books*, and her work has been the subject of profiles from *The Boston Globe* to *The New York Times*. Lewis is a sought-after public speaker, with a mainstage TED Talk that has received over three million views. She received her BA from Harvard University, an MPhil from Oxford University, an MA from the Courtauld Institute of Art, and her PhD from Yale University. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Tyler Mitchell (born in Atlanta, 1995) is a Brooklyn-based artist, photographer, and filmmaker. He received a BFA in film and television from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts in 2017. Mitchell’s work is held in private and public collections and has been published widely in magazines, including *Aperture*, *Dazed*, *i-D*, *Interview*, *M le magazine du Monde*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, *W Magazine*, *WSJ Magazine*, and *Zeitmagazin*. In 2018, Mitchell was commissioned to photograph Beyoncé for *Vogue*, making history, at the age of twenty-three, as the first Black photographer to shoot the magazine’s cover. His work is in numerous private and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, Studio Museum in Harlem, and Brooklyn Museum, all in New York; National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; and National Portrait Gallery, London. Mitchell’s first solo exhibition, *I Can Make You Feel Good* (2019–20), was presented at Foam, Amsterdam, and at the International Center of Photography, New York. He is the photographer of the catalog for *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*, the Costume Institute’s spring 2025 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. His solo exhibition *Wish This Was Real* (2024–26) opened at C/O Berlin in 2024 and toured to the Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki; Photo Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland; and Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris. Aperture published his highly anticipated monograph, *Wish This Was Real*, this fall.

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Vision & Justice, founded by Sarah Lewis, is an award-winning initiative that generates original research, curricula, and programs that reveal the foundational role of visual culture in America's representational democracy. The initiative builds awareness of the impact of images in the public realm and their capacity to shape the interwoven fabric of individual identity, community collaboration, and democratic participation. Through institutional collaborations, leadership convenings, publications, and public programs, Vision & Justice serves as an organizer, partner, and resource for today's leaders—and those to come—in fostering representational excellence. For more information on the initiative, visit visionandjustice.org.

For images, contact BFA.com or publicity@aperture.org.
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About Aperture

Aperture is a nonprofit publisher that leads conversations around photography worldwide. From its base in New York, Aperture connects global audiences and supports artists through its acclaimed quarterly magazine, books, exhibitions, digital platforms, public programs, limited-edition prints, and awards. Established in 1952 to advance "creative thinking, significantly expressed in words and photographs," Aperture champions photography's vital role in nurturing curiosity and encouraging a more just, tolerant society.

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