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**Press Release**  
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**Press contact:**  
**Aperture:**  
Lauren Van Natten  
+1 212.946.7151  
[publicity@aperture.org](mailto:publicity@aperture.org)

**Aperture**  
548 West 28th Street, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
T +1 212.505.5555  
[aperture.org](https://aperture.org)

# Aperture Releases *Kinship & Community: Selections from the Texas African American Photography Archive*

**Publication Including New Photo Essay by Artist Rahim Fortune Celebrates the Rich History of Photography Made by and for Black Communities in Texas**

**New York, February 17, 2026**—Publishing on March 3, *Kinship & Community: Selections from the Texas African American Photography Archive* presents an inspiring example of collective self-representation and portrays the role of Black photographers in creating an indelible record of American life. Drawn from the Texas African American Photography Archive, a visual record of Black culture since the 1870s, this publication of more than 150 images celebrates a proud but overlooked regional culture while testifying to the power of photography as a social tool.

Typically operating small studios that provided portraiture, promotional images, and event documentation, many of the photographers in *Kinship & Community* worked within their communities to develop an enduring vision of hope and uplift. Photographs by Marion Butts, Elnora W. Frazier, Earlie Hudnall Jr., Alonzo Jordan, and Benny A. Joseph, among others, record family gatherings, social traditions, educational milestones, sports achievements, local businesses, as well as the activism that defined the civil rights era. Their primary subject was the everyday expression of a vibrant and self-sufficient Black culture—an exhilarating achievement in the wider context of entrenched racial oppression.

Completing this volume is a vivid new photographic essay by artist Rahim Fortune, commissioned by Aperture and Documentary Arts, that considers the archive’s legacy and bridges it with the twenty-first century. From the summer of 2024 through the winter of 2025, Fortune made *Between a Memory and Me*, a series of photographs depicting various community events and gatherings across Texas. Fortune hoped to strike a balance between showing both youth and elders in landscapes that felt familiar to him, and the resulting images spark conversations across generations about the broader relationship people have with the land.

*Kinship & Community* is copublished by Aperture and Documentary Arts and features an introduction by scholar Deborah Willis, a conversation between historian Annette Gordon-Reed and Texas African American Photography Archive cofounder Alan Govenar, and essays by writers and curators Nicole R. Fleetwood and Brian Wallis. This project was made possible with generous support from Documentary Arts.

Founded in 1985 by Alan Govenar to advance new perspectives on historical issues and diverse cultures, **Documentary Arts** is a nonprofit

organization based in Dallas and New York. The **Texas African American Photography Archive** was founded by Govenar and artist Kaleta Doolin in 1995 and has grown to include more than sixty thousand images from the 1850s to the 1970s in a variety of formats, which provide a regional context for Black history and culture in the United States and help build a network and resource for mentorship among African American photographers in Texas. Over the years, the Archive has sustained a commitment to community engagement through exhibitions, internship opportunities, and educational outreach, including the publication of books and catalogs and development of public programs.

**Nicole R. Fleetwood** is the Paulette Goddard Professor in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. A MacArthur Fellow, she is a writer, curator, and art critic interested in Black art, cultural history, aesthetics, photography, and documentary studies. She is the author of *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration* (2020), which received the National Book Critics Circle Award in Criticism, and she curated an exhibition of the same name for MoMA PS1. She was also the guest editor of *Aperture* magazine's Spring 2018 issue, "Prison Nation."

**Brian Wallis** is executive director at Center for Photography at Woodstock, Kingston, New York. He was deputy director and chief curator at the International Center of Photography, New York, from 2000 to 2015. He is the author or editor of numerous books, including *Imagining Everyday Life: Engagements with Vernacular Photography* (2020), *African American Vernacular Photography* (2005), and *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self* (2003).

**Annette Gordon-Reed** is the Carl M. Loeb University Professor at Harvard University. She is the author of *On Juneteenth* (2021), "*Most Blessed of the Patriarchs*": *Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination* (2016), and *Race on Trial: Law and Justice in American History* (2002). Her 2008 book *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* received the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize in History.

**Alan Govenar** is a writer, folklorist, poet, playwright, photographer, filmmaker, and director of Documentary Arts, a nonprofit organization he founded in 1985 to advance essential perspectives on historical issues and diverse cultures. He is a Guggenheim Fellow and the author of more than forty books, including *Come Round Right* (2025), *Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life and Blues* (2010), *Untold Glory: African Americans in Pursuit of Freedom, Opportunity, and Achievement* (2007), *Deep Ellum and Central Track* (1998), and *Stoney Knows How* (1981).

**Deborah Willis** is university professor and chair of the Department of Photography and Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. A MacArthur and Guggenheim Fellow, she has written numerous books on African American photography and culture, including *The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship* (2021), *Posing Beauty: African American Images from the 1890s to the Present* (2009), *Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits* (2008), and *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers, 1840 to the Present* (2000).

**Rahim Fortune** is a photographer from Austin, Texas, and the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma. His books include *Hardtack* (2024) and *I can't stand to see you cry* (2021), which was nominated for the Paris Photo–Aperture

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## Press contact:

### Aperture:

Lauren Van Natten

+1 212.946.7151

[publicity@aperture.org](mailto:publicity@aperture.org)

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New York, NY 10001

T +1 212.505.5555

[aperture.org](http://aperture.org)

Photobook of the Year and winner of the Rencontres d'Arles Louis Roederer Discovery Award. He was shortlisted for the 2025 Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize.

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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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