

'Harlem: In Situ' at Addison Gallery Explores the Neighborhood's Complex History and Influence on Generations of Artists

by VICTORIA L. VALENTINE on Jul 24, 2019 • 2:58 pm



"Three Little Girls Eating Ice Cream Cones" (1936) by Lucien Aigner

WHILE AFRICAN AMERICANS have lived in Harlem for centuries, photographers and artists have notably documented what became black Harlem for about 100 years and continue to train their sights on the cultural mecca increasingly defined by gentrification. The storied Harlem that captures the imagination was established with a rich mosaic of migrants from the South and artists of African descent from around the world who brought intellectual energy and a creative flowering to the neighborhood where politics, progress, and poverty were in constant competition.

"Harlem: In Situ" at the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Mass., considers the neighborhood's complex history and influence on generations of artists, writers, and musicians. The exhibition is rooted in the gallery's collection of Harlem street photography, which includes series by Lucien Aigner, Aaron Siskind, Carl van Vechten, and Roy DeCarava. Lorraine O'Grady's *"Art Is..."* images capturing a 1983 performance during Harlem's African American Day Parade are on view, along with *"Harlem, USA"* (1975-79) and *"Harlem Redux"* (2015), two bodies of work by photographer Dawoud Bey.

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Artists active from the late 1920s to today are featured “in an effort to understand the myriad creative processes born of sustained engagement with this distinctive place.” In addition to the photographs, paintings and prints by 20th century figures such as Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Aaron Douglas, William H. Johnson, and Jacob Lawrence are included in the exhibition, along with contributions from a new generation—Jordan Casteel, Kehinde Wiley and Sherrill Roland, who performs and displays his [Jumpsuit Project](#), raising issues about the contemporary scourge of mass incarceration.

The museum has been organizing programming around the question “What is America?” Curated by Stephanie Sparling Williams, “Harlem: In Situ” grew out of that exploration. **CT**

“Harlem: In Situ” is on view at the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., March 30–July 31, 2019

TOP IMAGE: LUCIEN AIGNER (Ersekujvar, Hungary, Sept. 14, 1901-March 29, 1999, Waltham, Mass.), “Three Little Girls Eating Ice Cream Cones,” 1936 (gelatin silver print, 4 7/8 x 6 9/16 inches / 12 x 17 cm). I Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, purchased as the gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010)

BOOKSHELF

Recently published, [“Dawoud Bey: Seeing Deeply”](#) provides a 40-year retrospective of the photographer's work. [“Dawoud Bey: Harlem, U.S.A.”](#) documents a series of photographs made from 1975-79. [“Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes: The Sweet Flypaper of Life”](#) was recently reissued. [“Carl Van Vechten: ‘O, Write My Name’: American Portraits, Harlem Heroes”](#) features portraits of 50 Harlem Renaissance figures. [“Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem”](#) accompanies a touring exhibition of the museum's collection. Also consider the new bestseller [“Dapper Dan: Made in Harlem: A Memoir”](#) and [“Social Practice Art in Turbulent Times: The Revolution Will Be Live \(Routledge Research in Art and Politics\)”](#)



Installation view of “Harlem: In Situ,” Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., March 30–July 31, 2019. Shown, From left, Works by Dawoud Bey and Kehinde Wiley

LORRAINE O'GRADY (Boston, Mass., 1934-), “Art Is... (Girlfriends Times Two),” 1983/2009 (c-print, 16 x 20 inches / 41 x 51 cm, each). I Courtesy of the artist and Alexander Gray Associates, New York

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Installation view of "Harlem: In Situ," Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., March 30–July 31, 2019. Shown, From left, Works by Lorraine O'Grady (21) and Jordan Casteel



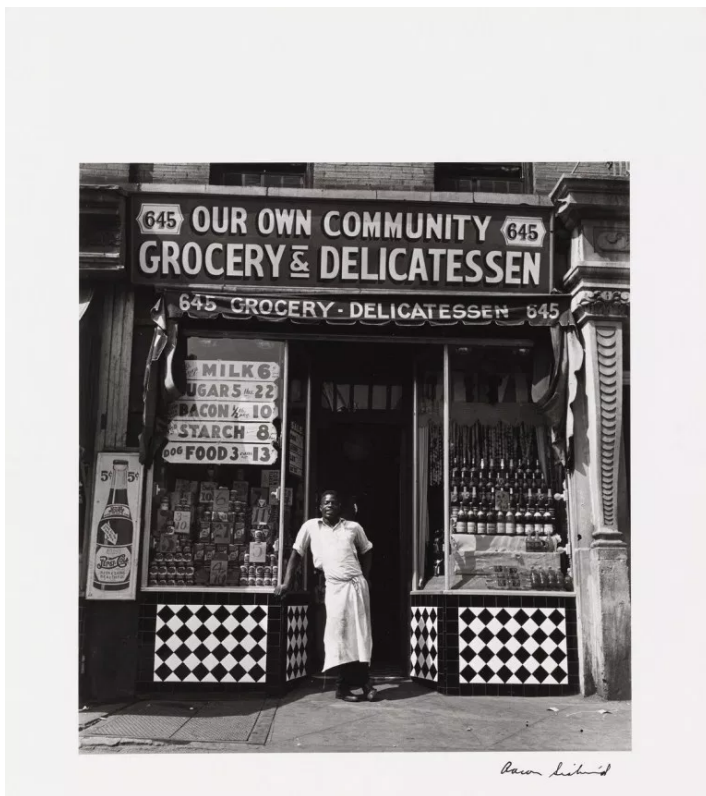
JACOB LAWRENCE (Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 7, 1917-June 9, 2000, Seattle, Wash.), "Kibitzers," 1948 (egg tempera on masonite, 20 in. x 24 inches / 50.8 cm x 60.96 cm). Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, gift from the Childe Hassam Fund of the American Academy of Arts and Letters



JAMES LESESNE WELLS (Atlanta, GA, Nov. 2, 1902-Jan. 20, 1993, Washington, D.C.), "Orpheus and the Musicians," 1983 (color linoleum cut print, 25 x 17 1/2 inches / 63.5 cm x 44.45 cm). Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, gift of Jacob and Ruth Kainen



Installation view of "Harlem: In Situ," Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., March 30-July 31, 2019. Show, At left, Works by William H. Johnson (3)



AARON SISKIND (New York, N.Y., Dec. 4, 1903-Feb. 8, 1991, Providence, R.I.), "Grocery Store," 1940, Printed 1976 from Harlem Document Portfolio (gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 inches / 35.56 x 27.94 cm). | Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, purchased as the gift of Thomas C. Foley (PA 1971) and Leslie A. Fahrenkopf



From left, LUCIEN AIGNER, (Ersekujvar, Hungary, Sept. 14, 1901-March 29, 1999, Waltham, Mass.), "Woman Manicuring Man's Fingernails," 1936 (gelatin silver print, 10 1/16 x 8 3/16 inches / 26 x 21 cm); and "Restaurant Owner in Storefront," 1936 (gelatin silver print, 10 x 8 inches / 25 x 20 cm). | Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Purchased as the gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010)

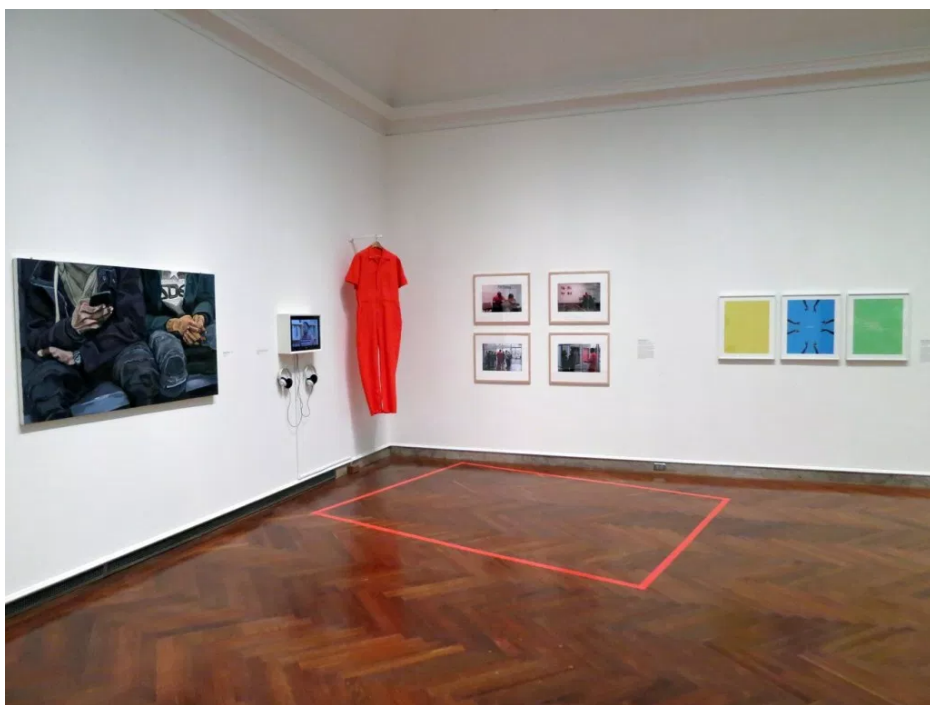
Installation view of "Harlem: In Situ," Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., March 30-July 31, 2019

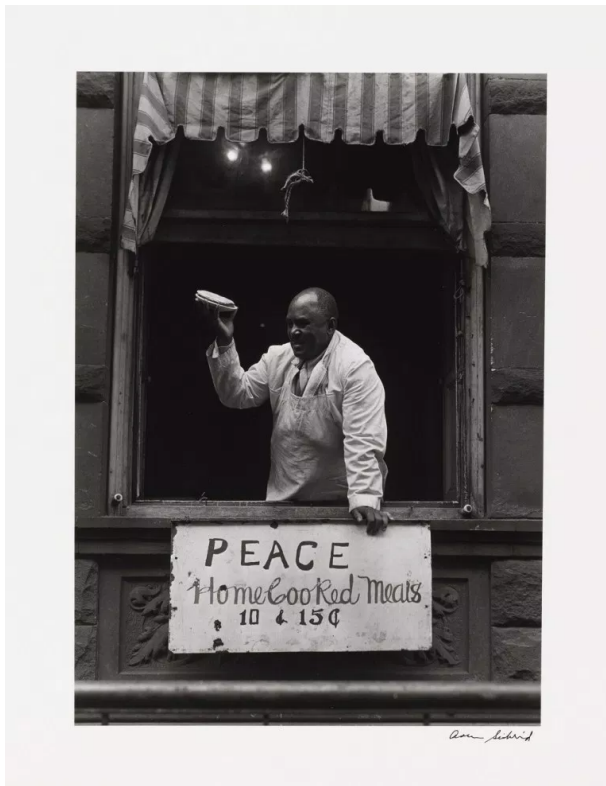


VINCENT D. SMITH (New York, N.Y., Nov. 12, 1929-Dec. 27, 2003, New York, N.Y.), "Shadows in Harlem," 1965, Published 1994 from Eight Etchings, 1965-1966 (etching, 19 7/8 x 16 1/4 inches / 50 x 41 cm). | Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, gift of Dr. and Mrs. George A. Violin

VINCENT D. SMITH (New York, N.Y., Nov. 12, 1929-Dec. 27, 2003, New York, N.Y.), "The Moon in Harlem," 1966, Published 1994 from Eight Etchings, 1965-1966 (etching, 19 7/8 x 16 1/4 inches / 50 x 41 cm). | Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, gift of Dr. and Mrs. George A. Violin

Installation view of "Harlem: In Situ," Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., March 30-July 31, 2019. Shown, From left, Works by Jordan Casteel, Sherrill Roland (video, jumpsuit, four images), and Miatta Kawinzi (3)





AARON SISKIND (New York, N.Y., Dec. 4, 1903-Feb. 8, 1991, Providence, R.I.), "Peace-Meals," 1937, Printed 1976 from Harlem Document Portfolio (gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 inches / 35.56 cm x 27.94 cm). I Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, purchased as the gift of Thomas C. Foley (PA1971) and Leslie A. Fahrenkopf



LUCIEN AIGNER (Ersekujvar, Hungary, Sept. 14, 1901-March 29, 1999, Waltham, Mass.), "Bill Robinson at a baseball game in Harlem," 1936 (gelatin silver print, 9 3/16 x 7 3/16 inches / 23 x 18 cm). I Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, purchased as the gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010)



Installation view of "Harlem: In Situ," Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., March 30–July 31, 2019. Shown, From left, Works by Dawoud Bey (4) and Kehinde Wiley



LUCIEN AIGNER (Ersekujvar, Hungary, Sept. 14, 1901–March 29, 1999, Waltham, Mass.), "Harlem grocery stand," circa 1936 (gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 inches / 20 x 25 cm). I Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, purchased as the gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010)