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Adger Cowans: Sense and Sensibility - Introductory Panels

Fairfield University Art Museum

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ADGER COWANS

Sense and Sensibility

Adger Cowans (American, b. 1936) is a celebrated photographer whose wide-ranging work includes the civil rights movement, jazz musicians, landscape, and artistic studies of the human form, water, and light. He is also one of the founding members of Kamoinge, a Black photographers collective whose mission is to 'Honor, document, preserve and represent the history and culture of the African Diaspora with integrity and respect for humanity through the lens of Black Photographers.' This exhibition presents Cowans' use of photography to articulate the beauty within the human condition and the world we live in with over fifty images from his illustrious career. Integral to Cowans' work is his conscious effort to remain "close to the natural movement of the universe through the vibrancy of life. I take a picture with my heart, not my eyes. The eyes see what the heart feels."

The Columbus, OH native was one of the first African American students to earn a degree in Photography from Ohio University in 1958. He studied under Clarence H. White, Jr. and later with Minor White. His education continued at the School of Motion Picture Arts and School of Visual Arts in New York City. Cowans secured a position assisting photographer Gordon Parks at LIFE Magazine, and later served in the United States Navy in Virginia Beach, VA. He continued to work as a photographer. Cowans also had an illustrious career in cinema as a film still photographer on over thirty Hollywood sets, working with directors like Francis Ford Coppola, Sidney Lumet, and Spike Lee.

Cowans has won numerous awards and fellowships from a varied commercial and personal work portfolio. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums, the International Center of Photography, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and numerous other art institutions have shown his photographs. The legendary photographer Gordon Parks, for whom Cowans once worked, called him "one of the most significant artists of our time" and noted, "Adger's individualism sets him apart, simply because he follows his convictions."

~ Halima Taha, Curator of the Exhibition

Adger Cowans:
sentido y
sensibilidad



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