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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – BOSTON

Model Citizen at Robert Klein Gallery Presents Rare and Unseen Fashion Photographs by Gordon Parks



GORDON PARKS, *James Galanos Fashion, Hollywood, California, 1961*
Courtesy of The Gordon Parks Foundation

Model Citizen
Fashion photographs by Gordon Parks

Robert Klein Gallery
38 Newbury St, Boston, MA 02116

September 26 – October 31, 2015
Opening Reception: Saturday,
October 2, 2 – 5 PM

BOSTON, MA – Following the runaway success of *Women in Clothes*, a group exhibition of 20th century fashion photographers that closed September 12, Robert Klein Gallery proudly announces *Model Citizen*, a selection of fashion photographs by the acclaimed photojournalist Gordon Parks. *Model Citizen* is the gallery's first show dedicated to Gordon Parks' work and marks the first time in the artist's career that his formal, experimental, and playful fashion photographs will be exhibited together in a solo show.

With the support of The Gordon Parks Foundation, which permanently preserves the artist's work, Robert Klein Gallery has assembled nearly 30 prints of Parks' fashion images taken between 1934 and 1965. *Model Citizen*, which includes many of these prints, starts September 26 at Robert Klein Gallery (38 Newbury St) and runs through October 31.

The breadth of Parks' vision and his masterful approach to every project he tackled was key to his success as an artist. Of the artist as a fashion photographer, Peter W. Kunhardt, Jr., Executive Director of The Gordon Parks Foundation, says: "Parks had the ability to photograph fashions and riots in the same day. He brought grace and honesty to each of his projects and it was his early work in 1940 at Frank Murphy's clothing store in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he first worked as a fashion photographer, that helped to cement his career."

Parks has long been celebrated for his iconic images of Malcolm X, Ingrid Bergman, and Muhammad Ali, as well as his editorial assignments on segregation in the American South, the Civil Rights Movement, and other key issues of his time. But it was by shooting fashion spreads that Parks first gained a foothold in the industry, long before he completed his seminal 1948 photo essay on a Harlem gang leader and became *Life* magazine's first African American staff photographer and writer.

To secure his first photography assignment, Parks approached the owners of Frank Murphy's, the chicest store in St. Paul, MN, and boldly assured them that he was an experienced fashion photographer. In what stands

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now as a testament to Parks' personality and perseverance, he won over the clients with a single image – the only good negative in a roll of film he overexposed. His experiments with movement and gesture, which caught models in motion and allowed fabric to flow dramatically out of the frame, showcased Parks as an adaptive artist able to incorporate whatever came between his camera and his subject.

In an essay published in *Gordon Parks: Collected Works*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. writes: "It is obvious that, from the start, he was enormously talented, gifted with an unfailing eye for beauty and composition. He seemed interested in just about everything, alive to an incredible array of subjects, ideas, and people. And he pursued those cosmopolitan interests relentlessly."

In 1970, Parks became the founding editorial director of *Essence* magazine, a monthly magazine for African American women. In *The Man from Essence: Creating a Magazine for Black Women*, Edward Lewis writes: "Gordon's editorial vision had been shaped by his years photographing for *Vogue* and *Life* magazines. These were the big picture books, splashy and flashy, beautiful to look at, arbiters of taste and style in American culture. Gordon envisioned a similar mandate for *Essence* in black American culture."

Expanding Parks' legacy to include his fashion work is a testament to his commitment to portraying every man, woman, and child as a person worthy of dignity, beauty, and respect.

A joint opening reception for *Model Citizen* will take place with Martha Richardson Fine Art, also at 38 Newbury St, from 2 to 5 PM on Saturday, October 3. Richardson is mounting *John Wilson: The Young Americans*, a selection of work by "Boston's native son" John Wilson, the figurative artist who passed away in January of this year. As contemporaries who were prolific during the Civil Rights Movement, Parks and Wilson play off of one another in this exciting pairing of shows.

Model Citizen will run from September 26 through October 31. Entry is free and open to the public.

In the gallery's satellite location, Robert Klein Gallery @ Ars Libri (500 Harrison Ave), an exhibition of photographs by Gohar Dashti will open with a First Friday reception on Friday, October 2. *Stateless*, Dashti's latest series of photographs, offers an outlook on citizenship and homeland that is especially pertinent given the current refugee crisis in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Dashti (Iranian, b. 1980) lives in Tehran, Iran, and her works are in the collections of the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; and Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, India. The show will run from September 26 through October 31.

ROBERT KLEIN GALLERY was established in 1980 and ranks among the world's most prestigious showrooms of fine art photography.

Robert Klein opened his Newbury Street space with early exhibitions of Diane Arbus, Annie Leibovitz, Sally Mann, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. From 1995 through 2008, Robert served as President of the Board of Directors of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD). During his tenure, Robert engineered the 2006 expansion of The AIPAD Photography Show New York to the Park Avenue Armory. The AIPAD Photography Show's move firmly established it as one of the leading photographic fairs in the world.

Robert Klein Gallery maintains an extensive and ever-changing inventory of 19th century, 20th century, and contemporary photographs. Participating in international art fairs such as Paris Photo, The Armory Show – Modern, and The AIPAD Photography Show in New York, Robert Klein Gallery provides its contemporary artists with international exposure while exhibiting works by recognized masters such as Ansel Adams, Helen Levitt, and Irving Penn. With 40 combined years of experience and a profound knowledge base, the gallery staff is committed to serving as a resource for both novice and seasoned collectors.

Robert Klein Gallery
38 Newbury St, Boston, MA, 02116

Tuesday – Friday, 10 AM – 5:30 PM
Saturday, 11 AM – 5 PM

In June 2012, Robert Klein Gallery began a long-term collaboration with Ars Libri to host satellite installations in the South End bookstore. Exhibits at **ROBERT KLEIN GALLERY @ ARS LIBRI** supplement and complement Robert Klein Gallery shows with additional works and printed material.

Robert Klein Gallery @ Ars Libri
500 Harrison Ave, Boston, MA, 02118
Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 6 PM
Saturday, 11 AM – 5 PM

Please contact Director Maja Orsic at the Robert Klein Gallery with any inquiries: 617.267.7997 or maja@robertkleingallery.com.

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