

FRANK STEWART'S NEXUS: AN AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER'S JOURNEY, 1960s TO THE PRESENT

Over the past six decades, Frank Stewart (born 1949, Nashville, Tennessee) has emerged as an expressive, individual voice who has engaged in spontaneous and sensitive portrayals of world culture and Black life. His emotionally charged photographs—immersive investigations of art, food, dance, music, and the environment—show Stewart as a creative visionary. This exhibition traces both his explorations on the road and the trajectory of his stylistic journey. Stewart photographs in black and

white and color, employs gelatin silver and digital techniques, uses different cameras and lenses, and prints his images in a range of sizes; for him, each print is a unique object. His work reflects the impact of artists Romare Bearden, Roy DeCarava, Jack Whitten, and Henri Cartier-Bresson, writers Langston Hughes and Amiri Baraka, and musicians Phineas Newborn Jr. (Stewart's stepfather) and Wynton Marsalis.

Stewart's practice began in Washington, DC, when he used his mother's camera to photograph the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Already at age 14, he demonstrated compositional sophistication. His travels to Africa, the Caribbean, and New

Orleans have inspired empathetic images that seek universal elements among diverse cultures. As the lead photographer and road manager for New York City's famed Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO, informally JALCO) from 1990 through 2020, he captured intimate moments of performers on- and offstage as they toured the globe. Recording the changing world around him, he has photographed the effects of the climate crisis and explored abstraction through improvised shots taken on the street.

Frank Stewart's Nexus—the artist's first major museum retrospective—presents themes that highlight Stewart's many

interests. Descriptions by the artist accompany the photographs.

Ahmad Jamal, 2013

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



Here, he's a guest musician with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, but Ahmad Jamal was the first one to take me out as a road manager, to transport equipment while I also shot photographs. This happened right after I graduated from Cooper Union.

Bean, Chicago, ca. 2018 (printed 2022)

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



While traveling with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, wandering the city in my off-hours, this jumped out at me. It looked like a Rorschach test—I am in there three times.

Self-portrait, Dominican Republic, 1986

Gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist



I've made hundreds of self-portraits. Mostly I'm a shadow or a reflection, like here.

RITUALS

Rituals are events repeated throughout life that often activate memories. They may be celebratory or sad, may occur daily or infrequently. They include births, reunions, weddings, funerals, bus rides to school, and religious services. Stewart's earliest photographs—from the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom—established ritual as one thread in the complex tapestry of his art. Describing its impact, he explained: "Before the march, there was no way that you could imagine there'd be no segregation in America." Stewart's compositional approach—his close

study of light, rhythm, tone, shape, line, and spatial relationships—provides another form of ritual.

In his subjects, Stewart finds continuity and connection, seen in an interment service in a New Orleans cemetery, Black women donning Easter hats in Harlem, and a wedding reception in Chicago—each affirms a form of community. Stewart beckons viewers to join him in getting to know the people who inhabit his photographs. He has credited Roy DeCarava's deeply sympathetic images in *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* (1955), a collaboration with Langston Hughes, with being inspirational to his early photographs: "I hadn't seen anybody show Black people like

DeCarava did. The love and compassion he had for his subject matter.”

Chicago Wedding Reception (The Secret),
1972

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Corrine Jennings, Kenkeleba
House, New York



This was at Farragut High School (now Farragut Career Academy) on Chicago's West Side. My friend Beau's mother, Bea, was catering the event and drafted some of his friends to help. I always had my camera with me no matter what else I was doing. When the sun lit up these ladies, I saw a picture presenting itself.

Chicago Wedding Reception (The Secret),
1972

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe



It is unusual for me to alter images by cropping, but this crop focuses on the secret because there is less open space on the left edge by the bride and her young guest.

*Nine Snapshots from March on Washington
for Jobs and Freedom, 1963*

Kodak drugstore processing

Collection of the artist



I was a kid. It was my first demonstration—almost overwhelming. I knew it was important, so I took my mother's camera to shoot it. It was interesting to me that it seemed like as many White people as Black people were there.

Loop Auto Park, Chicago, 1976

Pigment inkjet print

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Purchased with the Lynne and Harold

Honickman Fund for Photography, 2021



I was visiting my grandmother when the sky suddenly got dark. The light came from the sign behind the elevated tracks, the train moving horizontally across the space, the car coming toward me, and the reflections on the wet street. There was geometry and tension between the direction of the train and the direction of the car.

Radio Players Series (or The Bus), 1978

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



I was asked by *LIFE* magazine to photograph gangs, but you can't take pictures of them unless you're in one. I suggested a "Youth in Harlem" series, which has subseries like this because everyone was carrying a boom box then, before cell phones. This is also about Black love and the tension of the couple looking in opposite directions.

*Boy and Motorcycles (or Suffolk County
Police), 1976*

Gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist



This was in the Sugar Hill section of Harlem, where the funeral of a Suffolk County policeman was taking place. An endless string of motorcycles was on the street waiting for their owners. The young boy seemed mystified by what was going on.

Contrast in Black and White, 1972

Gelatin silver print

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Gift of the artist, 2021



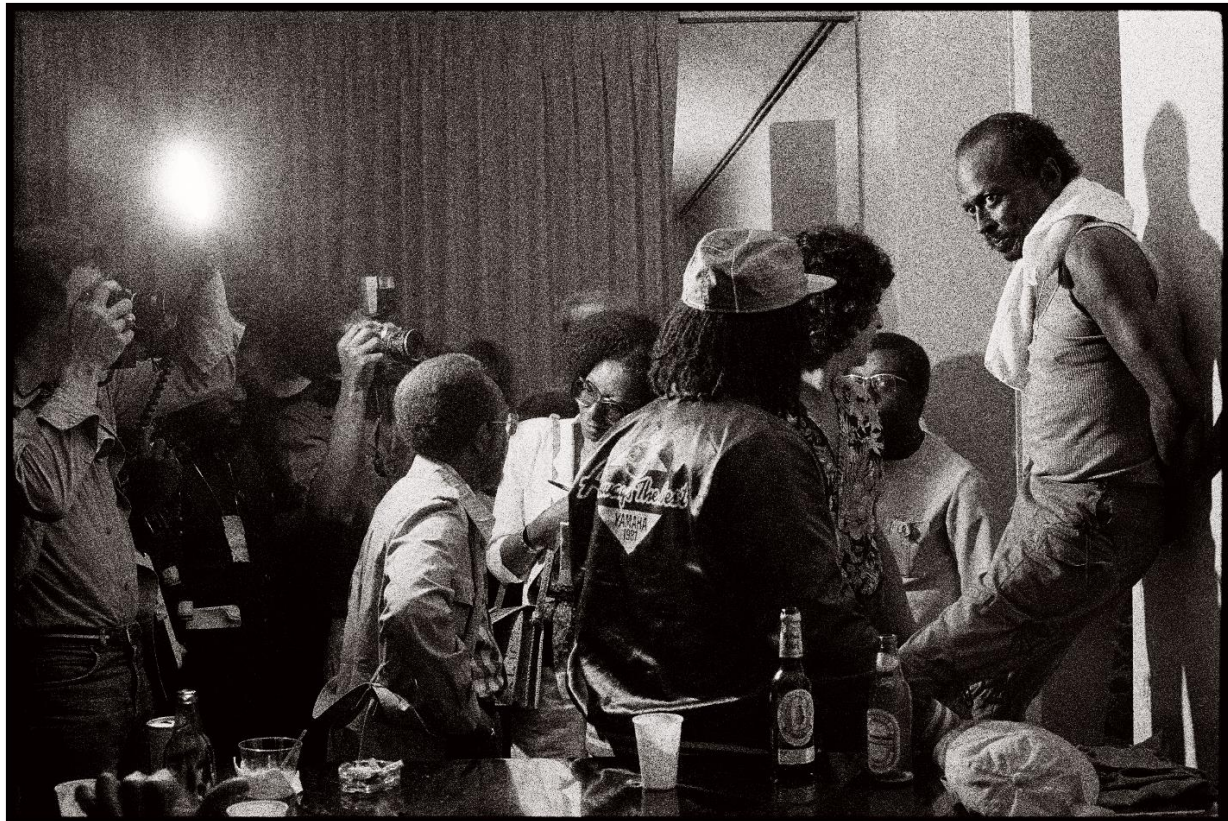
I was in summer school at the Art Institute in Chicago in Gary Winogrand's photography class. This was on a bus going downtown on

South Park Way (now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) when a sort of tension between the attitudes of the two women surfaced. I was looking for or responding to formal or metaphorical tensions.

Miles in the Green Room, 1981

Inkjet print

Private Collection



I was freelancing for *Ebony* magazine, but it took Miles (Davis's) sister's connections to get me into the green room, where the cast goes before a show. I knew him from my

childhood because his sister lived a few doors from my dad's house in Chicago. Miles was coming back to the jazz scene after an absence of some years.

Neon Pool Cue, Harlem, 1975

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



This poolroom was in the building of the first Studio Museum in Harlem, at Fifth Avenue and 125th Street. As the person went out the door, the light that flooded in illuminated the pool cue as if it was neon. Photography is light on surface.

Alex in the Keyhole, 1975

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY

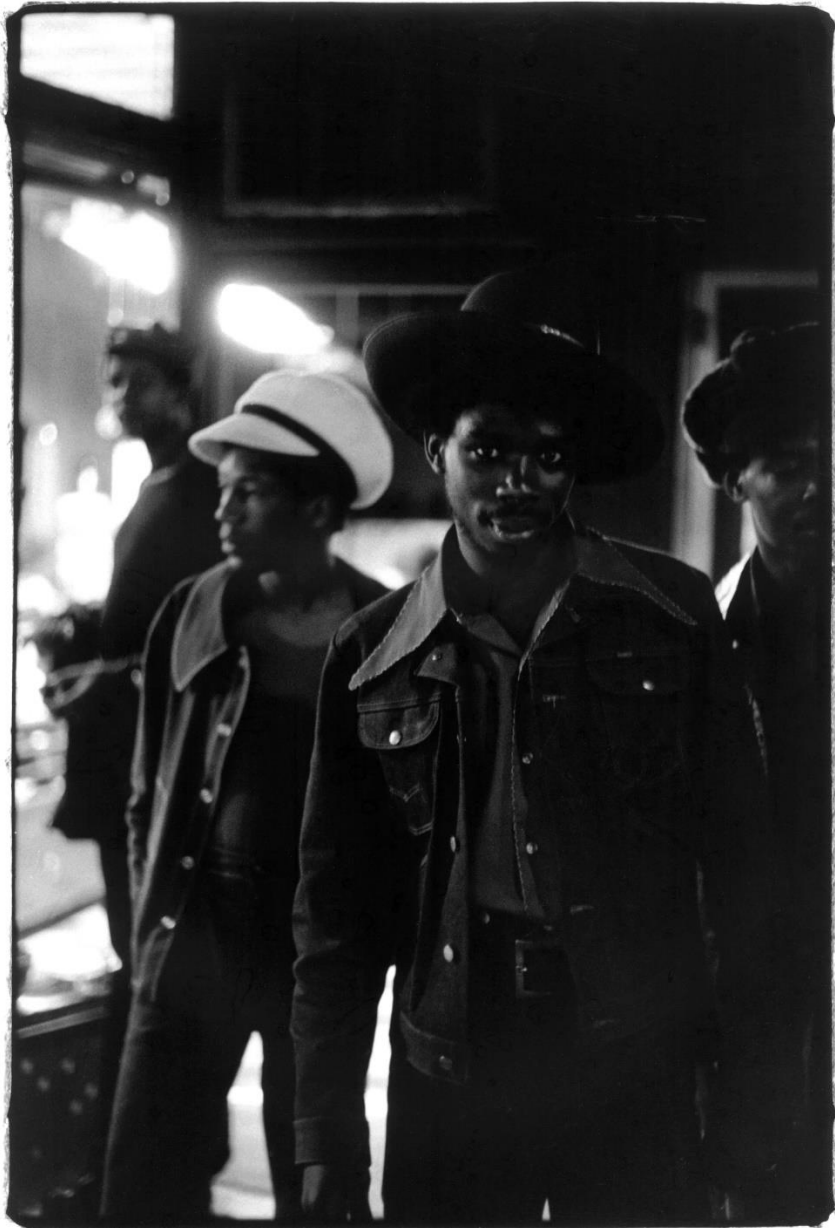


I was working as a day laborer when a rich Black man in New Rochelle renovated the Keyhole Hotel. Alex was laying the floor. The sun coming through the two round windows caught my interest, how it lit up the space and emphasized the round shapes and straight lines.

George in the Doorway, 1969

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



George had just gotten back from a trip. I was friendly with his brother and was taking pictures in my New Rochelle neighborhood in New York, even before I went to Cooper Union (to study photography). This was shot in Tarrent's Grocery, where my first exhibition was held, also in 1969.

George in the Doorway, 1969 (printed later)

Inkjet print

Collection of Corrine Jennings, Kenkeleba

House, New York



This later print takes advantage of newly developed technology, leading to the possibility of a larger image and a different clarity of inkjet printing than the one printed in 1969.

Only God to Watch My Back, NY, 1987

(printed 2021)

Pigment print

Tammy Haygood & Stacy Nathaniel Jackson



This is T.C. (Top Cat), who just got out of jail. I asked if I could take his picture, and he said if I did, he wanted me to show where he got shot in the back. So he took off his shirt and turned around. Then he said I should wait until he put his metal for survival (his cross) behind him because only God was watching his back.

Gorée Island Painter (or Slave Castle Back),

2006

Chromogenic print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



At the Slave Castle (in Senegal, a museum and memorial to the victims of the Atlantic slave trade), we came upon this artist making paintings, but for me it was this strong back of a Black man that caught my attention, a metaphor for slavery.

Easter Sunday, Harlem, 1976 (printed 1978)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Eileen and Major E. Thomas, Jr.



When I was young, I got something new to wear at Easter, and the ladies in my family got their Easter bonnets. I was at the old

Studio Museum on the holiday and figured that someplace nearby was a group of women wearing special Easter hats. So I went out looking and found them a block or two up Fifth Avenue.

Desnambuc, 1975

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Corrine Jennings, Kenkeleba

House, New York



Desnambuc is the name of the boat Romie (Romare Bearden) and I took on a day trip to

Dog Island, off Anguilla, from his St. Martin home. It was the first time I traveled with him to the Caribbean. I love the woman's face; maybe she's wondering what interested this crazy tourist.

St. Louis Cemetery II, 1980

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



I was in New Orleans assisting (producer)
Nelson Breen with *Bearden Plays Bearden*,
part of a Philip Morris–sponsored film series.

This captures the second line (the New Orleans tradition of playing upbeat music during a funeral procession), an important subject for Bearden.

Klan Rally, Jackson, Mississippi (or Ku Klux Klan), 1981

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



On a National Endowment for the Arts grant to photograph the South, I was going

through Jackson and read in a local paper that there was to be a Klan rally the next week. So I went on to Memphis for a few days and came back to Jackson to photograph the rally.

SOUND, TASTE, TOUCH

Stewart's photographs of musicians, offerings of foodstuffs, and celebrations at festivals and parades capture the senses of sound, taste, and touch. Gospel music, the blues, and jazz have been fundamental to Stewart's life. As the lead photographer and road manager for Jazz at Lincoln Center, Stewart had unusual access to the lives of orchestra members, enabling him to shoot some of the most profoundly intimate views of jazz life. He has contributed photographs to several books on jazz, including *Blues and Abstract Reality* featured in *Sweet Swing* *Blues on the Road: A Year with Wynton*

Marsalis and His Septet (1994), a collaboration with Marsalis. Other candid images here highlight jazz legends on- and offstage as well as dancers reveling in the street and at music venues.

A talented chef, with specialties in gumbo and barbecue, Stewart has prepared meals for restaurants and parties throughout the world. He provided visuals like *Smoke and the Lovers*, *Hawkins Grill* for Lolis Eric Elie's book about barbecue in the United States, *Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the Heart of Barbecue Country* (1996). In *Juneteenth '93, 19th of June Celebration, Mexia, Texas*, also from that book, Stewart's tightly locked composition of bodies in

motion demonstrates how the spaces between forms are as important as the forms themselves. He explained: "The photograph is always changing, just like the music is always changing. It can be rhythmic, it can be harmonious, have open spaces, and repetition."

*Juneteenth '93, 19th of June Celebration,
Mexia, Texas, 1993*

Gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist



Mexia is near Galveston, where the
Confederate Army and the region's slaves

learned on June 19, 1865, that slavery had ended throughout the United States, two years after President Lincoln had declared the Emancipation Proclamation. Celebrations like this continue today.

*Youth in Harlem Series: Man Dancing with
Two Girls, 1976 (printed later)*

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



Sometimes I'd go to a Harlem police station to ask which streets had taken out a license to do a block party. Usually there were a few every weekend, and this was taken at one of them.

Smoke and the Lovers, Memphis (or Smoke and the Lovers, Hawkins Grill), 1992 (printed 2009)

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



Lolis Eric Elie and I were asked to do a sample chapter and a sample photo for our proposed book on barbecue. This place in Memphis was my image. My uncle worked there when he was 16. The owners knew my whole family, so it seemed to be a good departure point.

Blues and Abstract Reality, 1990

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



This is in a professional photographer's studio, as the Wynton Marsalis Septet and musicians from Duke Ellington's group were morphing into the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Waiting around for the shoot to take place, I recognized the dramatic power of the composition, intending it as a wink at the cover of a 1961 album by composer and jazz saxophonist Oliver Nelson, *The Blues and the Abstract Truth*.

Warmdaddy in the House of Swing, New York, 1996

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



Wessell (Warmdaddy) Anderson was playing in the Kaplan Penthouse, a precursor to Dizzy's Jazz Club (at Lincoln Center), at the

top of a building on West 56th Street. Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra had an office there. The movement is captured because I shot off another photographer's flash.

Stomping the Blues, 1997

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Rob Gibson



We were on a world tour of Wynton

Marsalis's *Blood on the Fields* (the Pulitzer

Prize-winning jazz oratorio about slavery and

its aftermath), and the orchestra is leaving the stage, like a second line. My title is a wink at Albert Murray's seminal 1976 book *Stomping the Blues*.

Roy Haynes, Alice Tully Hall, 2002

Gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist



The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra often invites guest musicians and Roy was one of them. Roy and I go back to the '50s when he recorded the classic album *We Three* with my stepfather, Phineas Newborn Jr., and Paul Chambers.

Bone and Silhouette (or Chris and Vincent),

2009

Inkjet print

Manny's Bistro



I shot Chris Crenshaw and Vincent Gardner in Stuttgart, Germany, in a factory that had been converted into a performance space.

Skaine and Coopty, Palm Beach, Florida,
1992

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Rodney M. Miller Collection

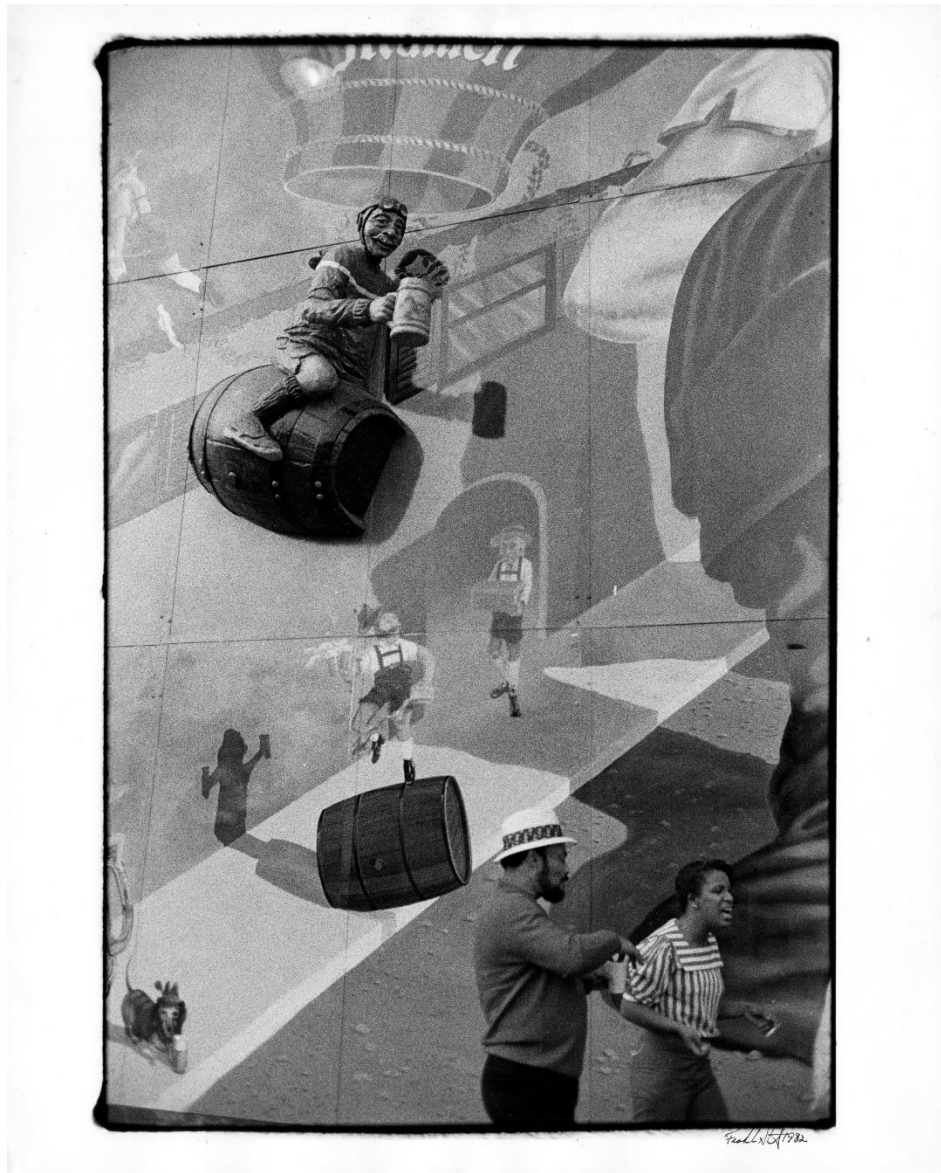


This is Wynton (Skaine, right) and Wycliffe Gordon, from when I was traveling with the Wynton Marsalis Septet, working on (the book) *Sweet Swing Blues on the Road*. The Septet also included Wessell Anderson, Eric Reed, Herlin Riley, Reginald Veal, and Todd Williams.

Beer Garden, Yonkers, 1982

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Corrine Jennings, Kenkeleba
House, New York



This was at a state fair. These kinds of places are my meat—when something suddenly presents itself. The Black man and woman walking away with their food in this surreal scene with two or three different things happening in the frame suggest the art of Salvador Dalí.

AFRICA, CARIBBEAN, NEW ORLEANS: SEARCHING FOR ROOTS

In 1974, enrolled in the Cooper Union Independent Study Program, Stewart traveled to West Africa, including Liberia, Nigeria, Upper Volta, Mali, Togo, Dahomey, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. His choice of sites coincided with the growing interest in Sub-Saharan Africa by African Americans as the African liberation movements of the 1960s intersected with the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the United States. Stewart returned to Africa on many occasions, notably to Mamfe, Ghana, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, where he

photographed culinary practices, daily routines, and cultural events.

Stewart first visited Cuba in 1977 at the invitation of the Cuban government through the Center for Cuban Studies in New York, traveling the country for a month with seven North American photographers. On subsequent trips, his subjects have included different forms of African-derived music and dance, such as salsa and conga, seen here.

A recurring site of interest for Stewart has been New Orleans, a fertile ground of African American and African diaspora history and culture. He photographed the Black Indians, a secretive community drawn from African Americans and Native Americans who could

not participate in mainstream Mardi Gras activities due to segregation. Stewart continues to record the city's unique traditions, as well as the drastic changes brought by the damage from Hurricane Katrina, also on view in the exhibition.

Call and Response, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire,
1974 (printed ca. 2017)

Inkjet print

Collection of George Nelson Preston, The
Museum of Art and Origins



This was from my first trip to Africa. They were having some kind of carnival on the street. When the drummers make a call, the dancers give the response.

Tailor Shop, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 1974

Gelatin silver print

Collection Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



Abidjan is like a small French town, with the center called the Plateau. This looked surreal to me, one of several businesses that were closed. Maybe it was a Sunday.

The Dead Man, Amanokrom, Ghana, 2004

(printed 2022)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



I went here with an itinerant reverend from Mamfe, who was in his 80s. He was often hired to do funerals and is standing at the foot of the bed, presiding over the service.

*Abena Pounding Fufu, Mamfe, Ghana (or
Pounding Fufu, Ghana), 2000 (printed 2004)*

Gelatin silver print

Collection of George Nelson Preston, The
Museum of Art and Origins



I was staying with George Preston in Abena's family compound. You can tell how strong she is as she uses only one hand to flip and beat the yams for the fufu, a mainstay of their diet (in Ghana).

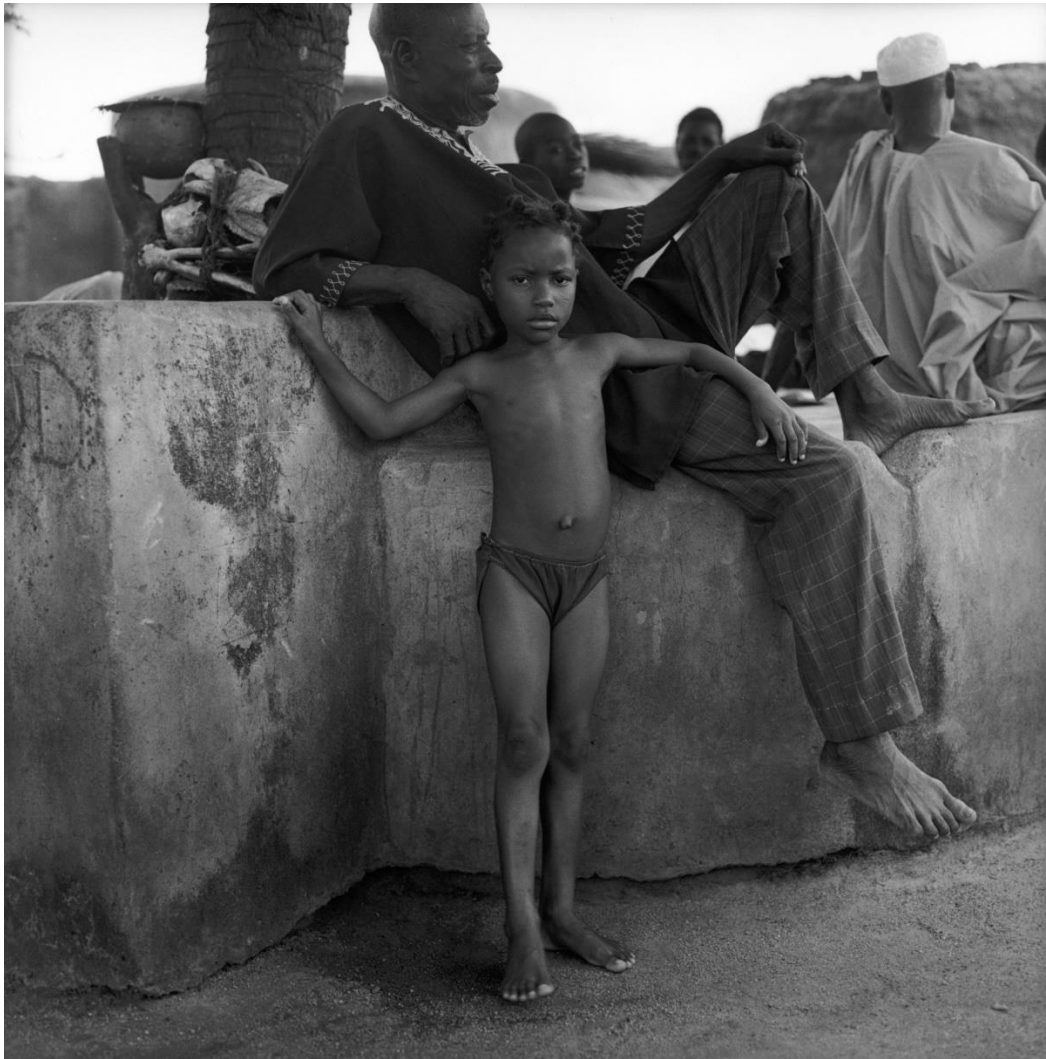
Chief's Granddaughter, 1999

Gelatin silver print

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Purchased with the Lynne and Harold

Honickman Fund for Photography, 2021



I was in Bolgatanga, in the north of Ghana, and probably got there by “tro tro” (a minibus taxi used throughout Ghana). I was taken by her direct gaze and the repetitions of geometric forms.

Clock of the Earth, Mamfe, Ghana, 1998

Inkjet print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



In Mamfe, when the sun comes up, the workday begins; when the sun goes down, it ends. To fulfill family needs, strong women walk on this main mountain road at both ends of the day, carrying water home from the town well.

George's Parlor, 2004

Inkjet print

Telfair Museums

Gift of Collection of Dr. Walter O. Evans,

2023.41



This is one of the parlors in the Museum of Art and Origins in Harlem, founded by George Nelson Preston. He was my first teacher of African art, and I traveled with him on several trips to Africa.

Boy and Two Girls, Mamfe, Ghana, 2004

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



It's a Sunday scene. The boy in the shadows is in a house attached to a church, and he's been to church already. The two girls are on their way to or from the services.

Getting the Spirit II, Mamfe, Ghana, 1998

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



This is in an open room with a dirt floor in a Pentecostal church. Music, as part of the service, revs the people up and gets the spirit working, rolling on the floor and jumping around.

Going for Salsa, Santiago de Cuba, 2003

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



They were getting ready to play for a parade.
I broke up the space using the responsive
forms of the drum, arms and legs, and the
street.

Santiago Carnival, 2003

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor

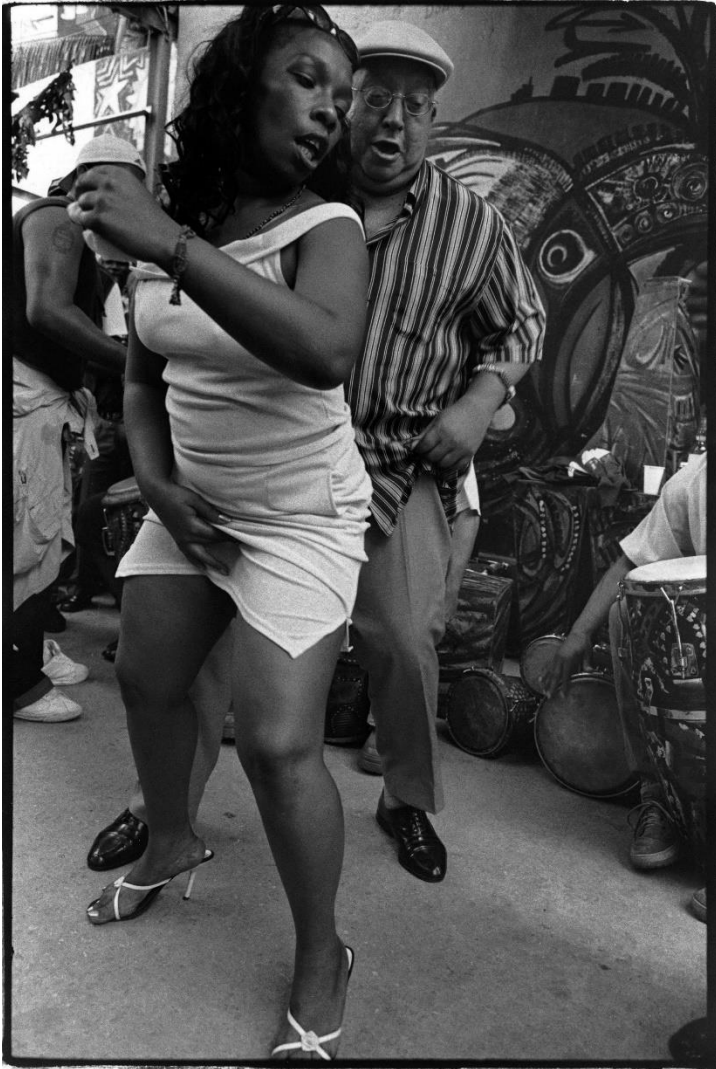


They are in costumes with glittery silver details for the parade. You can tell from the girl's expression the love and admiration she has for her older brother.

Callejón de Hamel, Havana, 2002

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



They were doing rumba on the street. There was dancing all over Havana.

Inside Out at La Conga, Santiago de Cuba,
2003

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



A lot of people were trying to get into a drum rehearsal in a large room filled with listeners. They needed to get by the gatekeeper, who let someone in when someone left. The girl outside was pleading with her eyes, "I'm next, please."

Watermelons, 2003 (printed 2023)

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



I saw these on a road trip in Cuba, coming back from a political rally.

Bicycle II, Cienfuegos, 2004 (printed 2022)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



I have an affinity for bicycles, photographing them all over the world. This town is on the southern coast of Cuba, and I was taken by all of the angles breaking up the space.

Number 1, 1978 (printed 2022)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



I was invited to attend the World Festival (of Youth and Students in Havana, Cuba). All of a sudden, Fidel Castro came into the auditorium to meet people at the festival. I was right under his podium while he gave a political speech in Spanish.

Ellis and Wynton Marsalis, 1991

Gelatin silver print

Private Collection



This was the first time I was in the Marsalis family home in New Orleans. Ellis (Wynton's father) was such a gracious guy. He and Wynton were going over a tune they were going to play together.

Untitled (from the *Second Line* series), 1976

Gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist



I made my first two trips to New Orleans in 1976. This was the second, for the Jazz and Heritage Festival. I had a letter from Romare Bearden to George Wein that let me shoot the festival. George Wein was the organizer, and I went all around photographing his festivals.

I'm Still Here, New Orleans, 1991

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



I was taken by the boy, and then noticed the lady across the street, who was making fun of the breakdancer, mimicking his hand motions.

Canal Street Shout, New Orleans, 1978

(printed 2017)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of George Nelson Preston, The
Museum of Art and Origins



This was shot on one of my trips to Louisiana. These people shouting, part of the city's vast street culture, made me think of field hollering during slavery.

Blue Car, Havana

2002

Chromogenic print

Private Collection, Washington, DC, courtesy
of Gallery Neptune and Brown



It's all about abstract painting.

ARTIST PORTRAITS, WINDOWS, DRAWINGS

From the 1970s to the present, Stewart has reexamined these motifs. His first extensive group of artists' portraits included stills of Romare Bearden and Alma W. Thomas featured in the film that accompanied the landmark exhibition *Two Centuries of Black American Art*, curated by David C. Driskell in 1976. Bearden was a mentor to Stewart, who photographed him often, both informally and at work in the studio. Musicians now appear more prominently in Stewart's portraits. Each image—whether unprompted or during a

performance—presents a strong psychological dimension.

Among the earliest of Stewart's "Windows" series is *Three Partitions*, a shot taken through a plastic covering surrounding a bocce field in winter. Later examples show views from the hotel rooms where Stewart stayed during his travels. Looking into and out of windows created another focus, as well as the objects seen from behind the glass.

Stewart's "Drawings" are fast thoughts that he confronts on the street: "It's all made up on the spot, just like a jazz musician improvises on a riff. That's what I am doing. I'm improvising on a riff." The works veer at

times toward abstraction and reveal an eye keenly attuned to the art of Henri Cartier-Bresson and Bearden. Primarily in color, they have received greater attention in the past decade. Stewart added the earlier black-and-white examples to this gallery as the street-smart origins of these works.

Boo and Humphrey, 1989

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



This is at Bradley's, a space on University Place (in Manhattan) where jazz people congregated, especially after midnight when other places closed. Humphrey (Walter Davis Jr.) was a composer and a pianist. Boo (Art Blakey) was a drummer. Sadly, they both died the year after I shot this.

Keisha at Lola's, 1986

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



Lola was from the Caribbean and had a restaurant on West 22nd Street in New York, serving great Southern and Caribbean food. On certain nights she would host gospel concerts, individual singers like Keisha, or groups.

Cassandra Wilson, 1994

Gelatin silver print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY

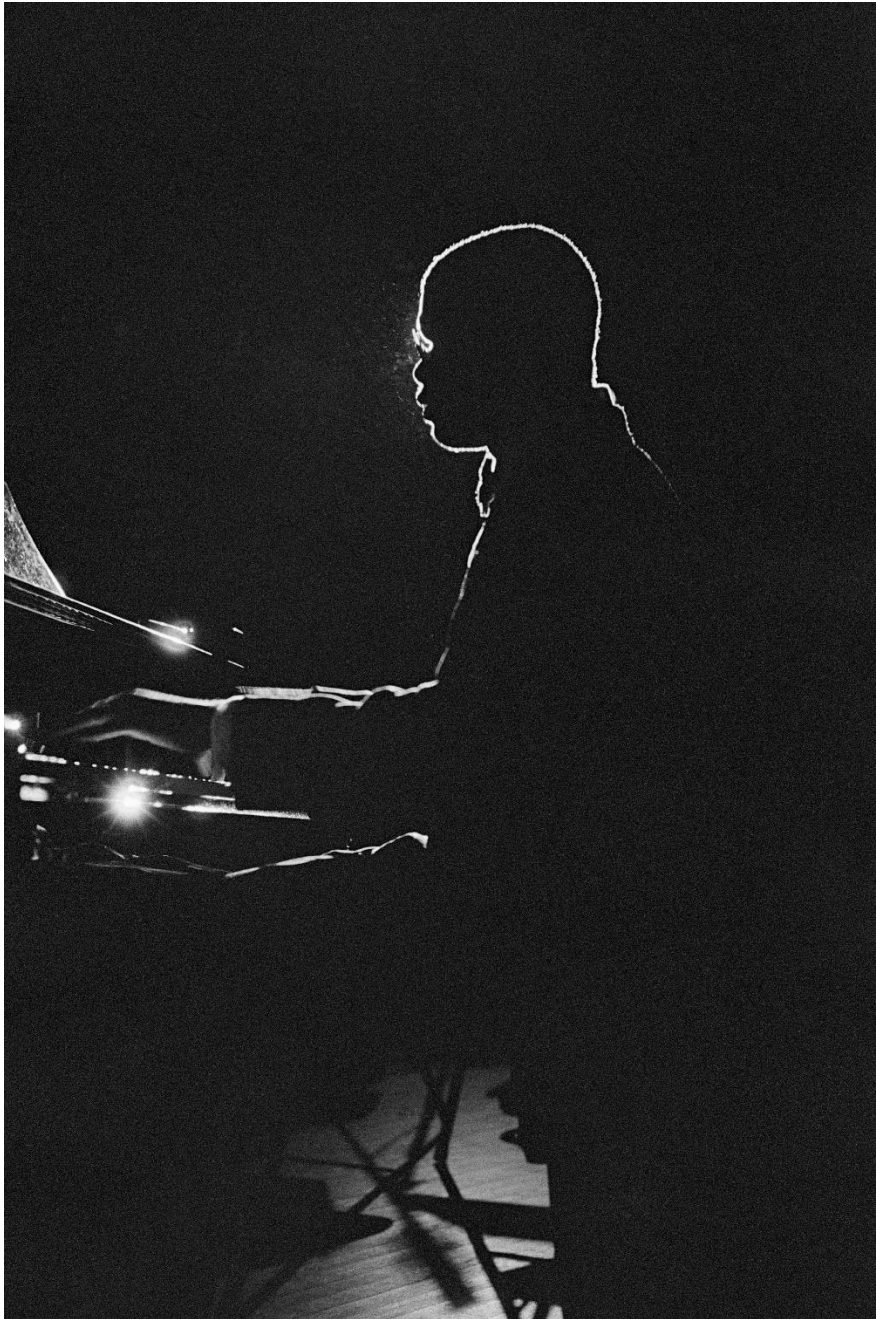


The great Cassandra was doing a sound check before a concert, one of the private times I get to photograph.

Marcus Roberts, 1994

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Rodney M. Miller Collection



Marcus was the leader of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JALCO), and I was the road manager and photographer. Wynton was still winding down his Septet, which would morph into JALCO.

China, 2019

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



They were selling trinkets and stuff. There was police tape to keep you out.

Wu Han, 2019

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



Stripes and bands with a human form
functioning as "X marks the spot" within this
world of abstraction.

Swordsmen, New Iberia, LA, 2015

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



I went to New Iberia for the World Gumbo Cookoff. We were the only team from the north and the only Black people. How can you do a gumbo cookoff with no Black folk in it?

Seoul, 1998 (printed 2021)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist



Looking straight ahead, big mirrors let me see what's happening behind me and in front of me.

Cubism, Times Square, 2016

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist

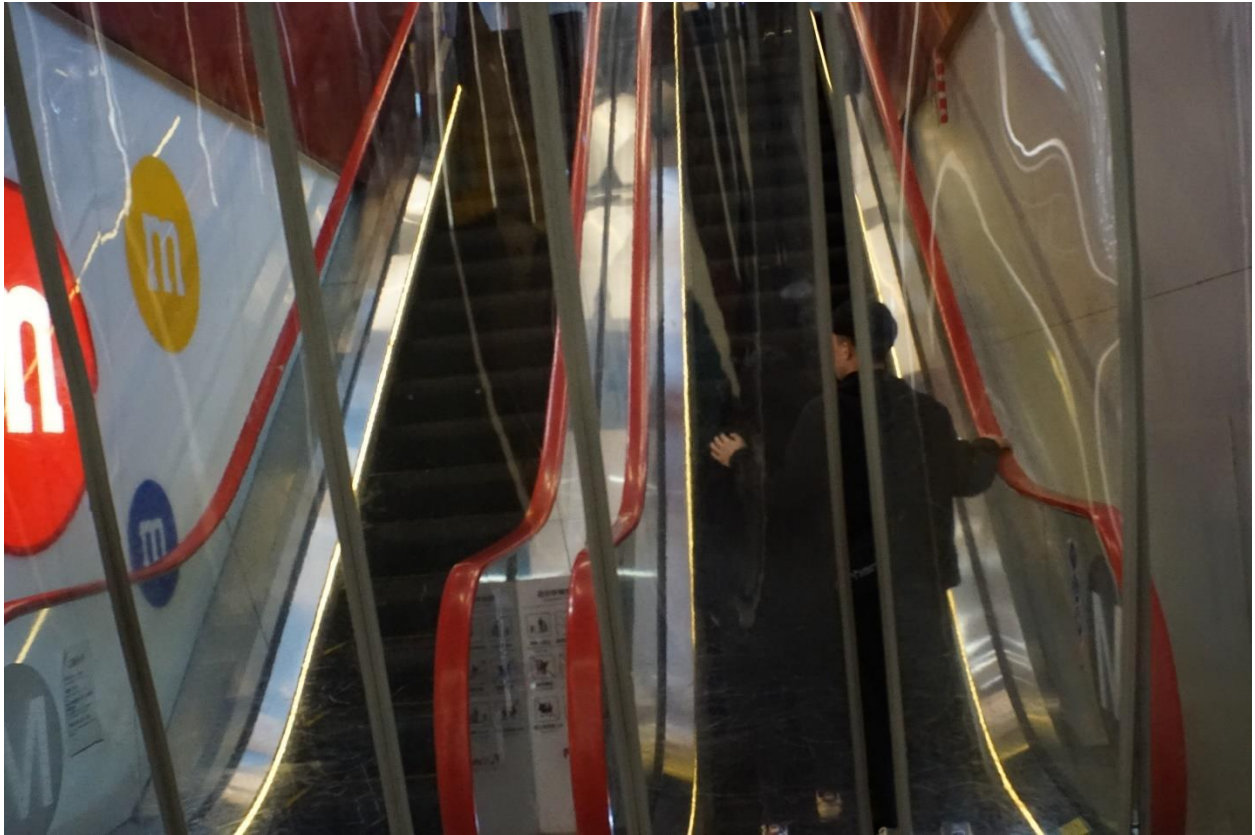


There was a sculpture made of two mirrors on different angles facing each other. It was an exercise on what the camera sees, not what you see.

Shanghai, 2019

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist

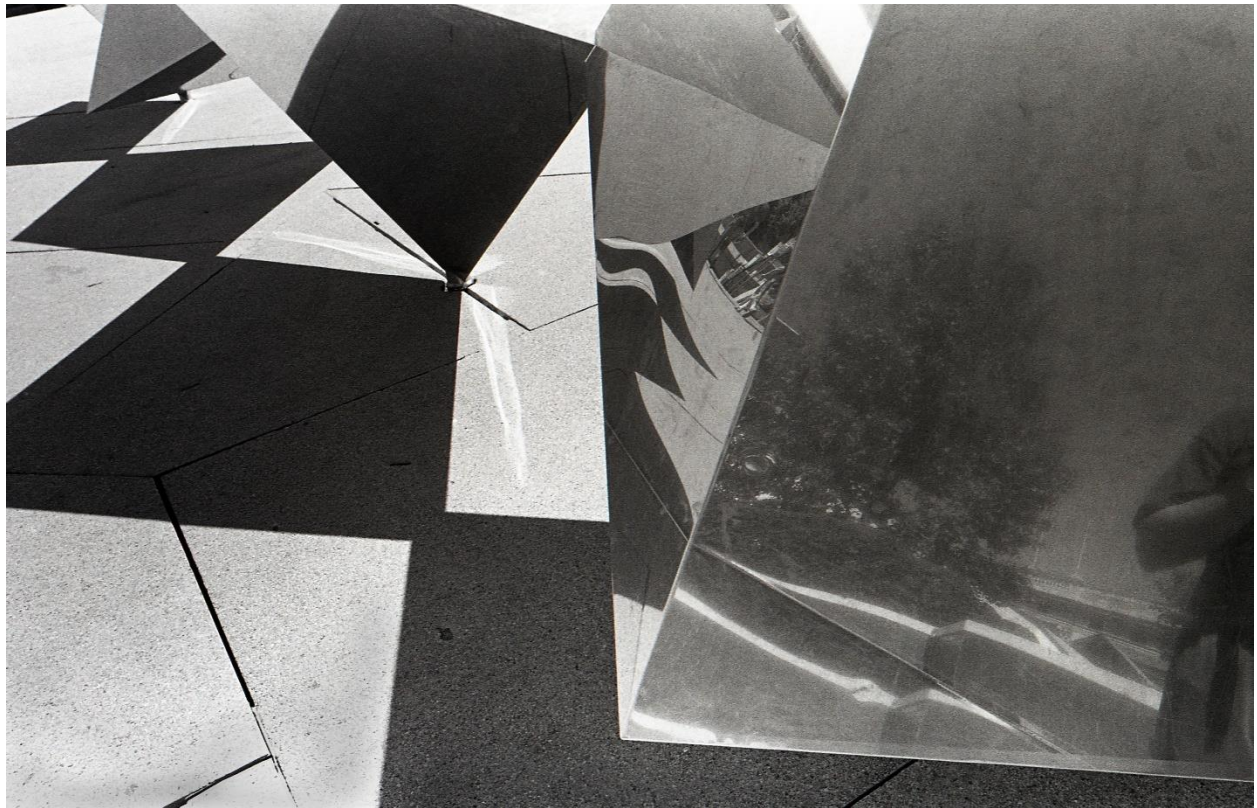


It's about how reflective surfaces change the way things look.

Lisbon, 1998 (printed 2021)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist



A sculpture casts a shadow on the floor in the center of the Port of Lisbon. Shadows are ephemeral, but they can turn a photo into a totally different form.

Cityscape, 2018

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



A ladder to the sky!

Manchester, England, 2014

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



I started making my "Drawings" more consistently when I started working with digital. This building has a central common space, so I went up to the top to get the breadth of the open area down below.

Amsterdam, 2019

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



This was right outside the Rijksmuseum, a sculpture of words—people were climbing on them and sitting on them, having fun.

Perugia, 1996

Inkjet print on aluminum

Collection of Sandra Grymes

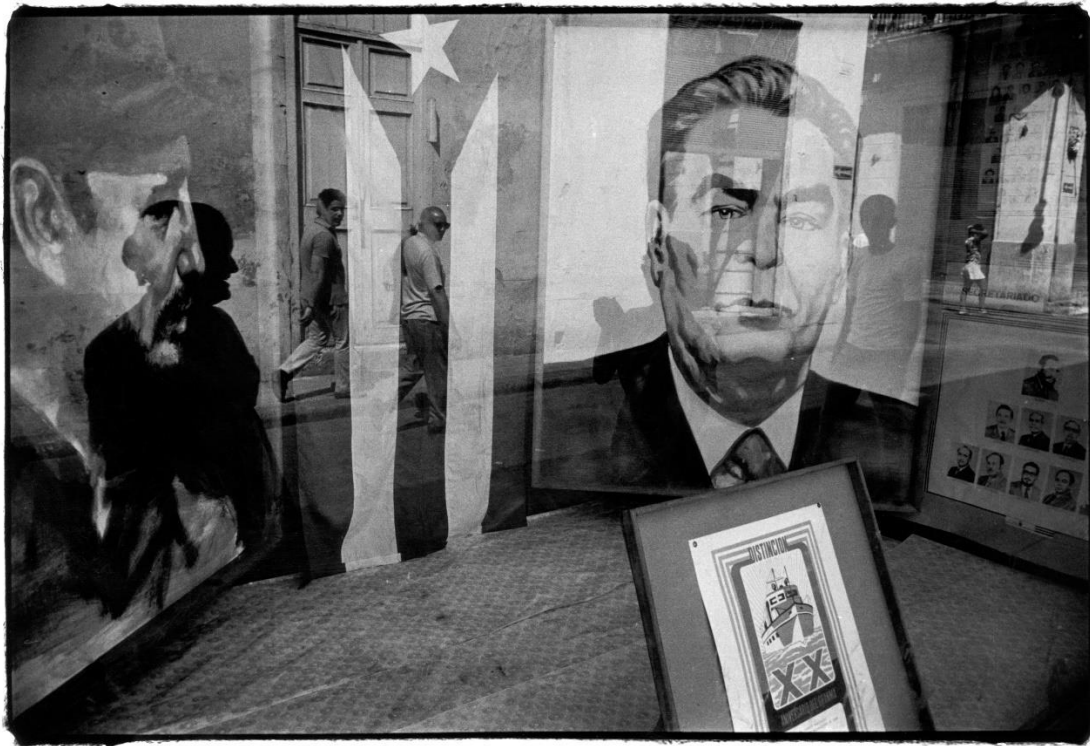


I spent so much time in hotel rooms traveling with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, looking out of windows. This was the first of my series of hotel windows. It just happened intuitively, but after I shot this, I started looking for these subjects.

Communist Windows, Havana, 1977 (printed 2022)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



This was taken on my first trip to Cuba. The reflections are a metaphor for the people living under Communism. They show Fidel Castro and Leonid Brezhnev.

Fulton Street, 1990

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



I was living in Brooklyn when I shot this. It's from a series called "Fulton Street"—there was so much activity every day on this street.

Three Partitions, 1971 (printed later)

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



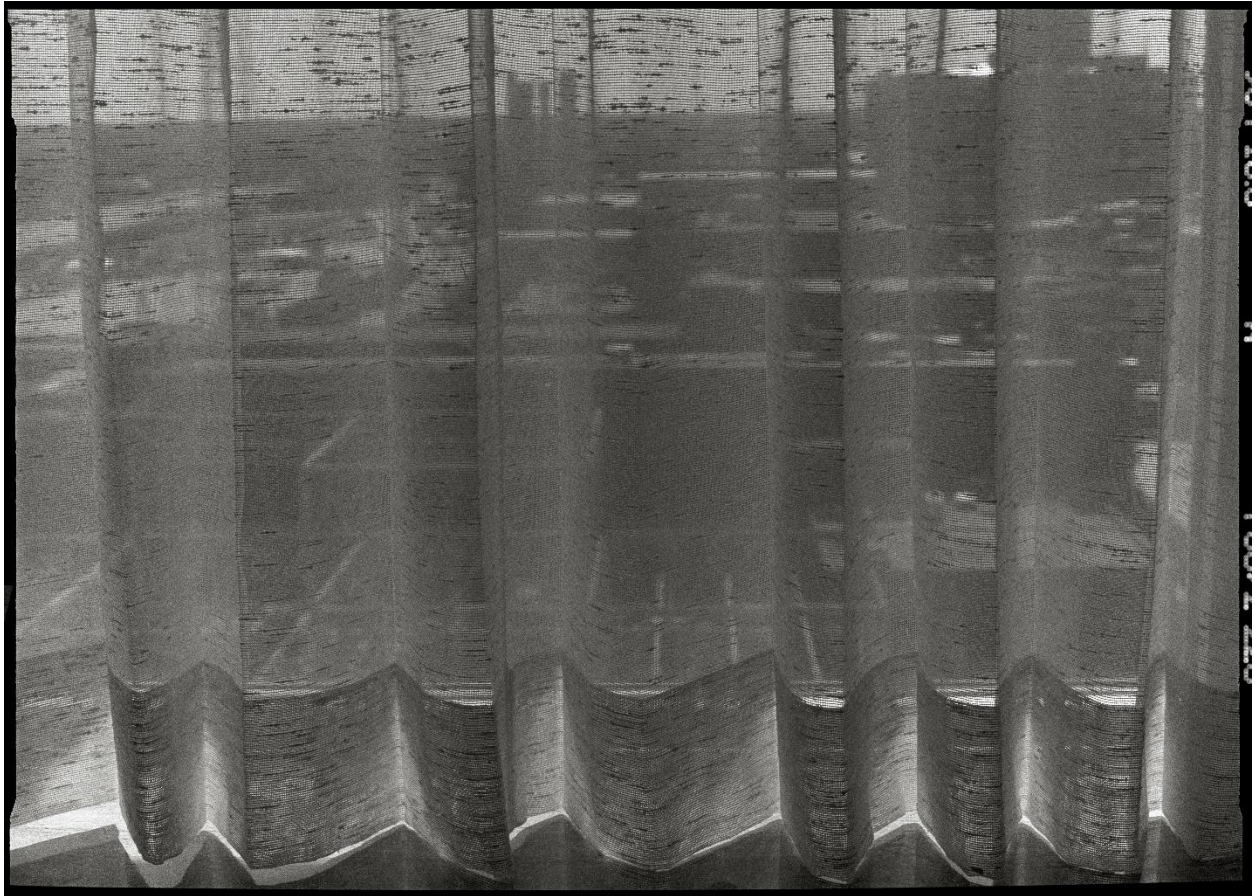
I shot this in Mount Vernon, New York, just after I started at Cooper Union. It's the middle of winter, and a group of Italian men are playing Bocce in an outdoor space that had a roof but no walls, with plastic installed to keep out the cold.

Louisville, 1998

Inkjet print on aluminum

Yale University Art Gallery

Gift of Collection of Adam R. Rose, Class of
1981, and Peter R. McQuillan



I was in Louisville with the orchestra. This view out the hotel window, especially when it is printed on aluminum, reminded me of Japanese ink drawings. It's one of the earliest that I printed on aluminum. Then I started looking for what subjects would look good on this material.

Endangered Species: David Hammons, 1981

(printed 2021)

Gelatin silver print

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Purchased with the Lynne and Harold

Honickman Fund for Photography, 2021

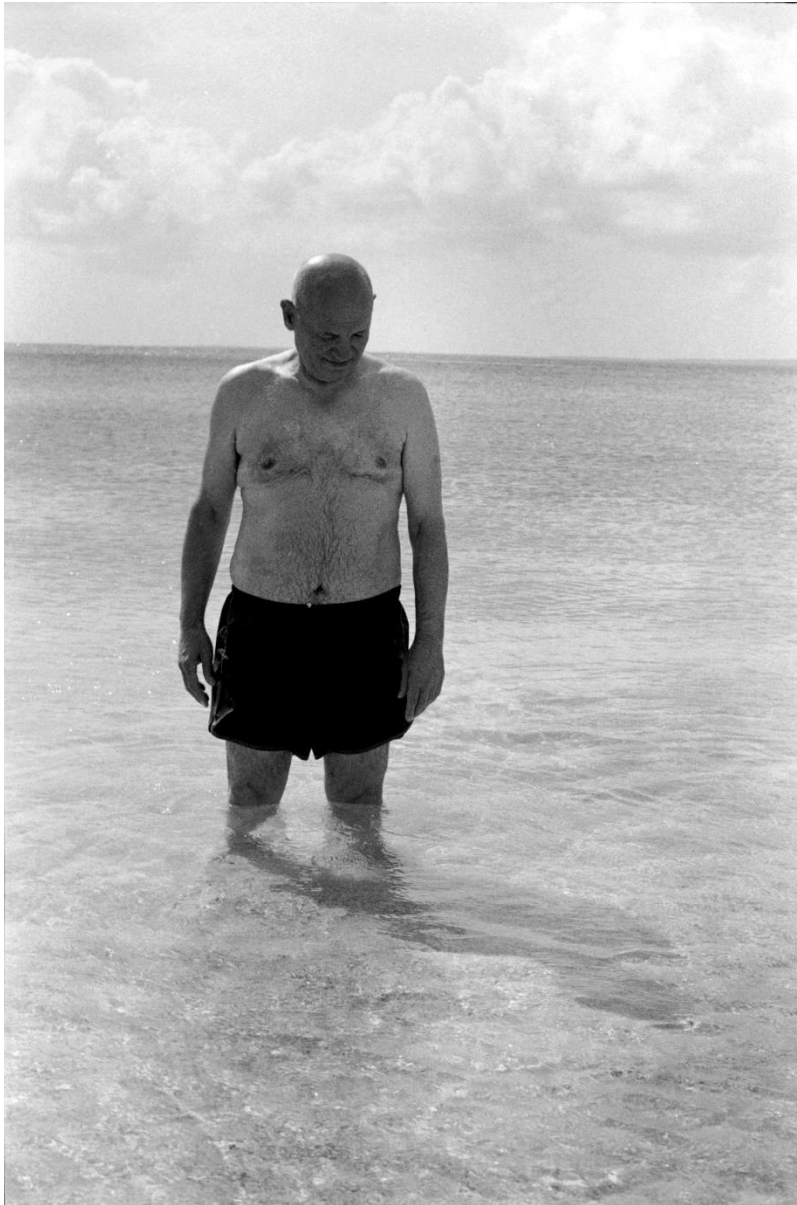


David and I were both in residence at the Studio Museum. He was a walking picture pretty much all of the time, and I was working on a book of images of African American artists. I'm still working on it.

Romie in the Ocean, St. Martin, ca. 1977

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Gordon and Peggy Cooper Davis



I had in mind a photograph I admired by David Douglas Duncan of Pablo Picasso on the beach. It is one of hundreds of my shots of Romie (Romare Bearden) between when I met him in 1975 and his passing in 1988.

*Alma W. Thomas (or Alma W. Thomas,
Painter), 1976 (printed 2019)*

Gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick,
Maine

Museum Purchase, Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund



This is one of many still photographs of artists I took while working with Johnny Simmons, Carlton Moss, and David C. Driskell on the film related to the 1976 exhibition *Two Centuries of Black American Art*.

*David C. Driskell (or David C. Driskell,
Painter), 1978 (printed 2021)*

Gelatin silver print

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick,
Maine

Museum Purchase, Gridley W. Tarbell II Fund



SOCIAL PRACTICE

The many ways in which communities are impacted by the irreparable destruction of the environment have been central to Stewart's undertakings since 2005. The devastation that Hurricane Katrina brought to New Orleans, one of his favorite cities, initiated this concern. Within days after the storm hit, Stewart headed there to document the aftermath. He has returned several times to examine the changes to the Black community, especially its churches and homes. Presented here are images of an elegant parlor that had been underwater for several months and a powerful abstraction of

a destroyed organ. Stewart also has photographed Isle de Jean Charles, islands sinking off the Louisiana coast, and in 2018 and 2020, he drove cross-country to document how the damage from wildfires has altered the California and Pacific Northwest landscape.

Works in this gallery taken in Africa reference Stewart's concerns for animal rights, educational opportunities, and the residual impact of slavery. These early photographs demonstrate how Stewart builds upon interests developed throughout his life.

California Fires Series, Camp Fire, 2018

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



The sun is reflecting on the road as a golden ribbon. The pond in the distance—water—ironically was of no use in stopping the flames from destroying the surroundings.

California Fires Series, St. Helen, 2020

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



A vineyard home in Napa Valley and the whole vineyard went up in flames. But that also stopped the fire—there were no big trees to keep it moving on.

L'Isle Jean Charles: Man-made Reefs, 2017

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist

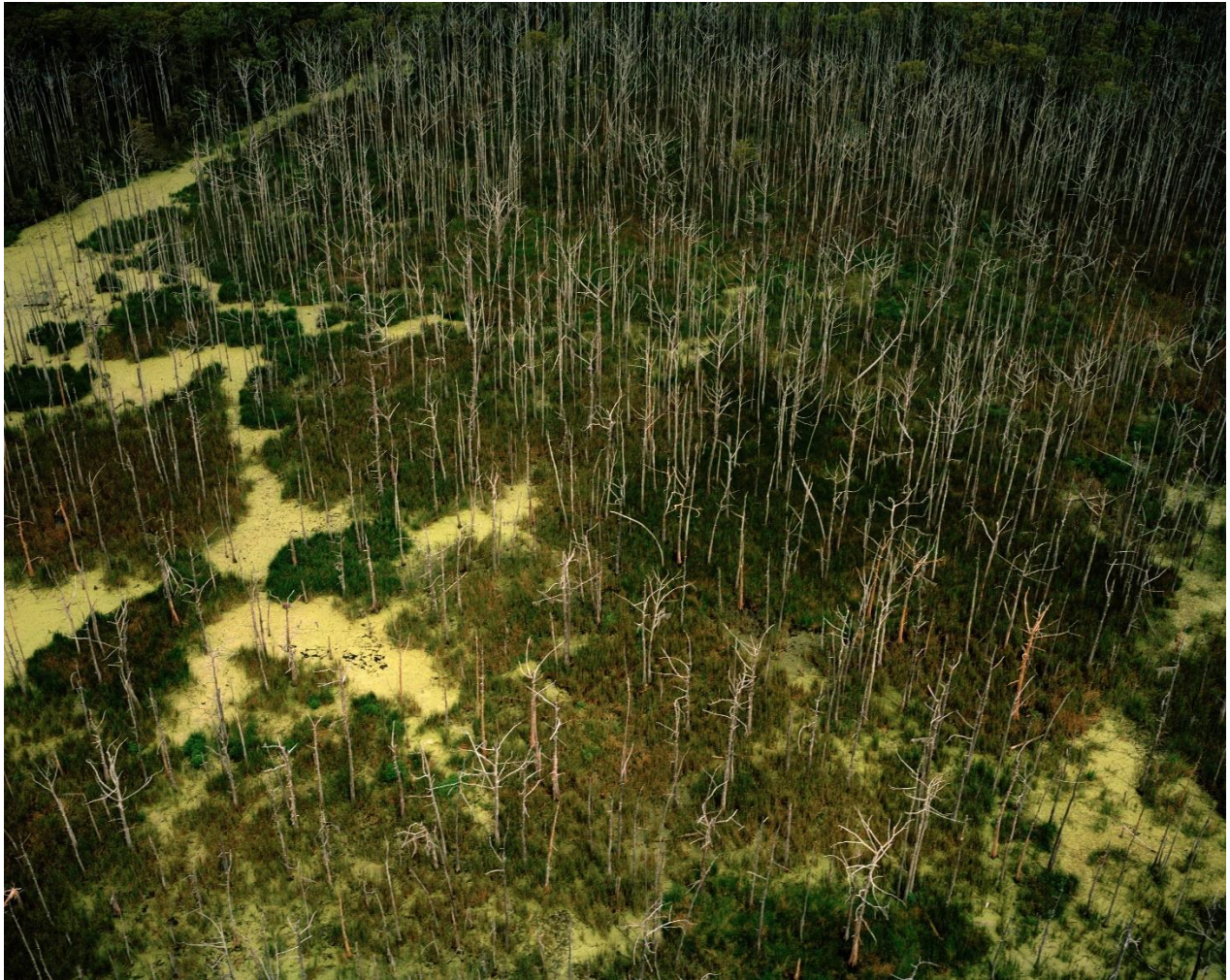


Canals were built in the marsh to carry away the oil that was pumped out. The fragile islands sunk as a result, and reefs were made to slow down the erosion by calming the waves before they hit land.

L'Isle Jean Charles, 2017

Inkjet print

Collection of the artist



Canals in the marsh (at Isle de Jean Charles, an island off the coast of Louisiana that is rapidly disappearing) permitted sea water to invade places and mix with or replace what used to be fresh water. Death became commonplace to foliage and trees such as these cypresses.

Katrina: Clouds and Railroad Tracks, 2005

Chromogenic print

Collection of George Nelson Preston, The
Museum of Art and Origins



This was four or five days after Katrina's rains ended. I was drifting around in a rowboat, shooting in the 7th Ward.

Katrina: Hammond B-3, 9th Ward, New Orleans, 2007

Inkjet print

The Medium Group, LLC, courtesy of Larry Ossei-Mensah



Black churches were at the center of the community and the culture. There were more than 100 before Katrina, and only 11 survived the hurricane's devastation.

Katrina's Houses I, 2005

Chromogenic print

Collection of the artist



The awning looks like piano keys, and the cross form in the middle bows to religion. Music and religion—so basic to Black life. Lines on the houses show how high the water had been.

Katrina's Parlor, 2006 (printed 2023)

Chromogenic print

Collection of the artist



All the wooden houses would eventually be destroyed. It was heartbreaking because the people never came back. The elegant houses reminded me of growing up in Memphis and visiting friends with my great-grandmother.

Slave Castle, Cape Coast, Ghana, 2004

(printed 2022)

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



This is a room where slaves were kept until they went to the “Door of No Return” that goes down to the ships for the Middle Passage (to be transported to the Americas as part of the Atlantic slave trade).

Three Young Camels, Mali, 2006

Inkjet print

Collection of George Nelson Preston, The
Museum of Art and Origins



I was right outside Timbuktu but had to spend the night before crossing the Niger River because of a terrible storm. We were traveling with the prince of the Tuareg people, and he took us to a nearby Tuareg encampment. These camels were there.

CULTURES IN COLOR

Color and scale have dominated Stewart's photography for the past two decades. His background as a student at Cooper Union included painting classes with Jack Whitten, who was a great influence. From his graduation in 1975 until Romare Bearden's death in 1988, Stewart spent many hours helping the artist in multiple ways and watching him develop his collage-paintings. Here, Stewart considers his large color photographs of cities throughout the world in the context of abstract painting and experiments with texture, color, and

composition. Stewart utilizes every inch of space: “If I can’t work it in, I work it out.”

St. Patrick’s Day, Savannah, GA, 2012

(printed 2021)

Chromogenic print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



In amongst the blossoms are America’s finest soldiers.

Yokohama, 2004

Pigment print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



The repetition of curved arcs is what attracted me here.

Savannah Tour Bus, 2006

Chromogenic print

Telfair Museums

Museum purchase with funds provided by

Ronald J. Strahan in honor of James

McKenna, 2007.9



It's about pigment and paint; painting with photography for me—I might have had a brush. The figures are saying "X marks the spot" of the photographic image, within an abstract map of colors.

Cargo, England, 2020 (printed 2021)

Pigment print

Collection of Fay and Blake Boswell



This is one of the most recent works in the exhibition. The dissimilar components are connected to each other by being in this frame. I'm more interested now in that kind of surrealist journey than I was in most of my earlier work, although there were suggestions as far back as the '70s.

CHROMATIC MUSIC

When working with musicians onstage, Stewart has many dramatic possibilities for enhancing his compositions, including the use of gels (colored plastic sheets) in front of the lenses of the lights, color scrims, and a cucoloris, which casts shadows and creates silhouettes. These tools were used to change the mood, light, and look of a room in several of these photographs. He explained: "I am trying to stretch the medium out. I am using the light of a flash like a brush, and I am bouncing it off the floor so you get a different perspective where the light comes from. There's motion and I am stopping the

motion with the light." When working outdoors, as seen in *Circle in the Square, Savannah* and *God's Trombones, Harlem, New York*, he takes advantage of natural light to capture colorful scenes bursting with the dramatic sounds of brass and percussion.

God's Trombones, Harlem, New York, 2009

(printed 2022)

Inkjet print on aluminum

Collection of Marquise Stillwell



It's an annual baptism of parishioners in Harlem. It was started by Daddy Grace, but he was gone by this time. The baptisms are still going on.

Cécile, New Year's, 2016

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



Cécile McLorin Salvant is in Dizzy's club at Jazz at Lincoln Center doing her thing to celebrate the holiday.

Blood on the Fields, 2014

Inkjet print

Collection of Greg Scholl



Blood on the Fields is by Wynton (Marsalis) and about slavery and its aftermath. This performance was in Rose Hall at Jazz at Lincoln Center. At the end, the musicians were revved up and did a second line as they went offstage.

Circle in the Square, Savannah, 2007

Chromogenic print

Telfair Museums

Museum purchase with funds provided by the
Ronald J. Strahan Art Acquisition Endowment
Fund, 2018.12a



In Savannah, at the St. Patrick's Day parade—the square is the frame, the circle is the tuba. The reflections in the tuba feed my exploration of abstract painting as photography.

The Bow, Modena, Italy, 1996

Inkjet print

Guess Family Collection, Louisville, KY



At the end of the concert, the orchestra took a few bows, this being the last of them. I especially appreciated the musicians bent over and wedged between the lighted arcs of the balconies and the circular cymbals behind the musicians.

Etienne, 2017 (printed 2022)

Inkjet print

Collection of Sing Lathan and Bining Taylor



Etienne Charles performing at the Savannah Music Festival in Georgia. He's from Trinidad and plays the congas as well as the trumpet.

Walter and Willie, 2004

Inkjet print

Collection of Elizabeth Cooper Davis



Panasonic had a showroom in the same building as Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, and we had an agreement to periodically do an "in-house" (photo shoot) there. The light was so beautiful behind the musicians (Walter Blanding, saxophone, and Willie Jones III, drums) and silhouetting them gave focus to that background.

CASE LABELS FOR BOOKS AND CAMERAS

*Sweet Swing Blues on the Road with text by
Wynton Marsalis and photographs by Frank
Stewart*

Published by W.W. Norton & Company, New
York, 1994

Courtesy of The Phillips Collection

As the lead photographer and road manager for Jazz at Lincoln Center, Stewart had unusual access to the lives of orchestra members, enabling him to shoot some of the most profoundly intimate views of jazz life. He has contributed photographs to several

books on jazz, including *Blues and Abstract Reality* featured in *Sweet Swing Blues on the Road: A Year with Wynton Marsalis and His Septet* (1994), a collaboration with Marsalis. *Blues and Abstract Reality* was taken in a professional photographer's studio. As Stewart notes, "Waiting around for the shoot to take place, I recognized the dramatic power of the composition, intending it as a wink at the cover of a 1961 album by composer and jazz saxophonist Oliver Nelson, *The Blues and the Abstract Truth*."

*The Sweet Breath of Life: A Poetic Narrative
of the African-American Family with text by
Ntozake Shange and photographs by
Kamoinge Inc. including Frank Stewart*

Published by Atria Books, Simon & Schuster,
New York, 2004

Private Collection

Inspired by *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*
(1955) with text by Langston Hughes and
photos by Roy DeCarava, this publication
united text and image to positively depict
Black life in America. Poet Ntozake Shange
provided the text while Stewart served as
editor to select works by Kamoinge Workshop
members. Stewart remarked, "The thrust of

the book is to portray a positive image of African American people, with style, dignity, humanity, and integrity . . . Ntozake provides the mortar, words, the poetry, and Kamoinge provides the bricks and photos to construct what is a lasting work of art."

*Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the
Heart of Barbeque Country with text by Lolis
Eric Elie and photographs by Frank Stewart*

Published by Ten Speed Press, Crown

Publishing Group, 1996

Private Collection

Stewart traveled and photographed for six months with writer and food historian Lolis Eric Elie.

*The Sweet Flypaper of Life with text by
Langston Hughes and photographs by Roy
DeCarava*

Published in 1955, reprint 2018

Courtesy Telfair Museums

In the mid-20th century, Langston Hughes and photographer Roy DeCarava married text and image to show the joys of life in Harlem. Frank Stewart recalls discovering the book and how “I hadn’t seen anybody show Black people like DeCarava did. The love and compassion he had for his subject matter came out in the book.”

*The Sound of My Soul: Frank Stewart's Life in
Jazz* curated by Ruth Fine

Exhibition Brochure, Ethelbert Cooper Gallery
of African & African American Art, The
Hutchins Center, Harvard University, 2019
Courtesy Telfair Museums

Jazz: Frank Stewart

Published by Café Royal Books, Liverpool UK,
2020

Private collection

*Traveling Full Circle: Frank Stewart's Visual
Music*

Exhibition brochure, Jazz at Lincoln Center,
New York, 2011

Private collection

*In the Spirit of Swing: The First 25 Years of
Jazz at Lincoln Center edited by Wynton*

Marsalis and photographs by Frank Stewart

Published by Farrer, Straus and Giroux, 2012

Courtesy Telfair Museums

*Romare Bearden: Photographs by Frank
Stewart, 2004*

Published by Pomegranate, 2004

Courtesy Telfair Museums

Timeless: Photographs by Kamoinge, 2015

Published by Schiffer, 2015

Courtesy Telfair Museums

Agfa Ansco Shur Shot Box Camera, ca. 1932-
40

Courtesy of the artist

Contax 645, ca. 1999

Courtesy of the artist

Kodak Folding Cartridge No. 3A Premo, ca.

1910-13

Courtesy of the artist

Kodak Retinette 1A, ca. 1959-66

Courtesy of the artist

Leica M2, ca. 1954

Courtesy of the artist

Nikon F, ca. 1959

Courtesy of the artist
