

# THE PRINT CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Untitled, 1980; Untitled, 1981; Untitled, 1981; from the series "Party Pictures"*

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NEW PUBLICATION  
FROM THE PRINT CENTER, PHILADELPHIA, PA

## William Earle Williams **PARTY PICTURES**

**PHILADELPHIA, PA** - (February 20, 2020) The Print Center is pleased to announce the publication of the new monograph ***William Earle Williams: Party Pictures***.

***William Earle Williams: Party Pictures*** is dedicated to the American photographer's acclaimed series of the same name. Williams' insightful photographs taken in the 1970s and 80s revel in the details of a particular moment and the unspoken cues of class, race and gender. In *Party Pictures*, you will find blue-blood doyennes in starched lace and society upstarts dripping with jewels alongside A-list celebrities and blue-collar wait staff. Williams employed his status as an artist to access otherwise inaccessible social events in Philadelphia, such as highbrow charity galas, as well as counter-culture costume parties and other gatherings. *Party Pictures* documents the end of an era and welcomes the next.



*Untitled, 1987; Untitled, 1979; Untitled, 1980; from the series "Party Pictures"*

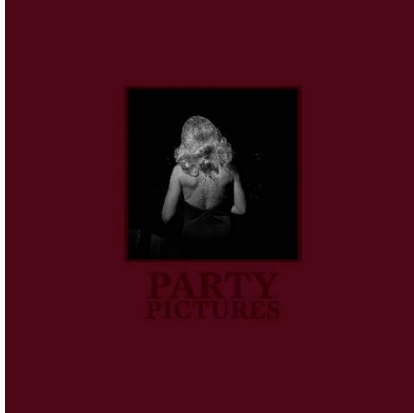
Williams' black and white photographs present the intersections of widely divergent communities, bound by their aspirations and foibles. From the upper crust of Philadelphia's Main Line society and those who served them to revelers at hair competitions, Halloween parties and art openings, *Party Pictures* probes the inner-workings of these complex social worlds. Masked figures mingle with superstars and other familiar faces, including Andy Warhol raising a glass at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (top right), publishing magnate Walter Annenberg emerging from Philadelphia's club for Jewish men (top left) and Rachel Harlow – the transgender girlfriend of Grace Kelly's brother Jack. Rich detail emerges from inky black backgrounds: an expensive watch, an ill-fitting tuxedo jacket, the flounce of a chiffon ruffle and layers of makeup. Williams' photographs capture fleeting moments in which his seemingly unaware subjects expose their true selves through demonstrating a variety of emotions from elation and ambition to boredom, exhaustion and awkwardness. Williams' images are a fascinating record of the time, touching on the history of photography, the legacy of Philadelphia and the societal changes of the late 20th century.

*It is great to see work that was begun in 1979 and completed thirty years ago made available to a new generation in a handsome book. My relationship with The Print Center is one of the most important professional relationships that I have. It has spanned decades and has provided encouragement and support at critical junctures in my career. The publication of the Party Pictures book is an example of that support and it is the sweetest.*

- William Earle Williams

**William Earle Williams** is the Audrey A. and John L. Dusseau Professor in the Humanities, Professor of Fine Arts and Curator of Photography at Haverford College in Haverford, PA. His photographs have been exhibited widely including in group and solo exhibitions at the Cleveland Museum of Art; Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, Durham, NC; Museum of Fine Arts Houston; Smith College, Northampton, MA; George Eastman House, Rochester, NY; and National Gallery, Washington, D.C. His work is represented in many public collections including the Cleveland Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts Houston; Metropolitan Museum of Art and New York Public Library, both New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; and National Gallery, Washington, D.C. Williams has received individual artist fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation; the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

# William Earle Williams PARTY PICTURES



Please join us for a Launch Party  
at The Print Center

**Thursday, March 12, 2020, 6:00pm**

*William Earle Williams: Party Pictures* was inspired by a 2011 exhibition of this work at The Print Center. Texts include an essay by The Print Center's former Jensen Bryan Curator John Caperton, connecting the "Party Pictures" to Williams' other bodies of work, an interview between Williams and Edith Newhall, art critic for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *ARTnews*, and an introduction by The Print Center's Executive Director Elizabeth Spungen.

## William Earle Williams PARTY PICTURES

Published by The Print Center, Philadelphia, PA (February 2020). Hardbound with tipped-in cover image, 8 ½" x 8 ½", 92 pages, 44 black and white tritone plates and 29 illustrations, in an edition of 500.

Designed by Laurie Churchman, printed by Brilliant, Exton, PA. Available from The Print Center for \$65.

ISBN 978-0-9723257-6-9

## Special Edition

A special edition includes a signed book and a gelatin silver print of *Untitled*, 1981/2020 (the cover image) in an edition of 20 with 5 APs. Retailing for \$600, the special edition is available at a pre-launch price of \$550 through March 11, 2020.

Books and Special Editions are available through The Print Center Gallery Store.

To make a purchase contact Evan Laudenslager, Sales & Program Manager,

at [elaudenslager@printcenter.org](mailto:elaudenslager@printcenter.org), 215.735.6090 x2 or order online.

# William Earle Williams PARTY PICTURES



Williams and designer Laurie Churchman on press. Photos: Courtesy of Brilliant

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*It has been eight years since John Caperton and I met William Williams for lunch at the Oyster House and proposed that a book be made of his photographs of parties, which at that time were the subject of an exhibition at The Print Center that John had organized. Soon, John, Willie, and I, along with The Print Center's Executive Director Liz Spungen, were meeting every couple of months to discuss the book's development. Laurie Churchman, who designed the book, joined us as well. Ksenia Nouril, who became The Print Center's Jensen Bryan Curator in 2019, shepherded the final stages of the book's production. I think I speak for all of us when I say how gratifying it has been to bring Williams' series the attention it deserves in such a thoughtfully designed book.*

- Edith Newhall

## Biographies

**John Caperton** was the Jensen Bryan Curator at The Print Center from 2007 to 2018. In 2011, he curated *Party Pictures: William Earle Williams*, which brought together a number of the works presented in this book. Caperton also included Williams' work in the 2009 exhibition *Streets of Philadelphia: 1970–1985*.

**Edith Newhall** is an art critic who contributes reviews to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *ARTnews* and other publications. She is a former staff writer for *New York Magazine*, where she covered the New York art world in features and reviews. She is the co-author of *In Artists' Homes* (Clarkson Potter Publishers, 1992).

**Elizabeth Spungen** is the Executive Director of The Print Center.

# Acknowledgements

The Print Center is grateful to Julie Jensen Bryan and Robert Bryan, the Provost's Office at Haverford College and the National Endowment for the Arts for their support.



## About The Print Center

Founded in 1915, The Print Center is the oldest nonprofit institution in the U.S. dedicated to the growth and understanding of photography and printmaking as vital contemporary arts through exhibitions, publications and educational programs.

Also published by The Print Center:

*Demetrius Oliver: Canicular*, 2015. Essays by John Caperton, Derrick Pitts and Michelle White

Will Brown and Thomas Devaney, *The Picture That Remains*, 2014. Introduction by Vincent Katz

*Edna Andrade: Color Motion*, 2012. Essay by John Caperton

*Emma Wilcox: Where it Falls*, 2012. Essay by Luc Sante, and an interview with Wilcox by John Caperton

*Isaac Tin Wei Lin: One of Us*, 2010. Interview with Lin by Nell McClister

Richard Torchia, *Sun Pictures & Other Broken Images*, 2007. Introduction by Jacqueline van Rhyn, essay by Geoffrey Batchen

Doug + Mike Starn, *To Find God not the Devil's Insides*, 2007. Co-published with the artists. Introduction by Elizabeth Spungen, essay by Martin Barnes

*Taken With Time: a camera obscura project*, 2006. Introduction by Jacqueline van Rhyn, essay by Marta Braun. *Taken With Time: a camera obscura project* was supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

*IMPRINT: a public art project*, 2002. Introduction by Vincent Katz, essays by Jean Wadleigh Curran, Vincent Katz and Jacqueline van Rhyn. *IMPRINT: a public art project* was supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

*Jerome Kaplan Prints*, 1973. Texts by George Bunker and Ruth Fine

*William Blake, Auguries of Innocence*, 1959. Illustrated by Leonard Baskin

*Five Centuries of Print Making: From the Collection of Lessing J. Rosenwald*, 1931

*A History of The Philadelphia Print Club*, 1929, by Dorothy Grafly

### The Print Center

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Free and open to the public  
Tuesday through Saturday 11:00am - 6:00pm

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For information on events and programs visit [www.printcenter.org](http://www.printcenter.org)

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