

HANDOUT 1: QUOTES

- Choose one quote that you feel best reflects your point of view or aligns with your experiences.
- Pair/share and discuss your understanding of its meaning and why you chose this particular quote.

“Photography was the way in which I could express my own feelings about racism in America, about the downtrodden. And somehow or another I might transcend my own experience. I live off of my emotions perhaps, you know. And so I had turned those emotions into some mercenary thing by which I could survive.”

— Gordon Parks

“The hold of white supremacy on the Black psyche was profound, and it was when we started to see the images that lifted us up, that made us feel that we were worthy, that we began to really demand justice. And so, Gordon Parks was a warrior for justice.”

—Darren Walker, *A Choice of Weapons: Inspired by Gordon Parks*

“I knew how my city was and the energy that was like kinda vibrating. So I just took to the streets... I remember uploading the image while all of this was going on saying “We’re sick and tired.”

—Devin Allen, *A Choice of Weapons: Inspired by Gordon Parks*, in reference to the Time magazine cover photograph he shot after the 2015 murder of Freddie Gray in Baltimore.

“If it wasn’t for Gordon Parks using his camera as a weapon against intolerance, poverty, and racism it wouldn’t have been possible for me to use the photograph—today in the 21st century—as a platform to generate resources to tell these counternarratives; to empower the subjects that are portrayed; and to use those photographs as a catalyst to create the change, and to allow the people to create the change they need who are actually in these images. What’s really important is the transition from a camera as a weapon to a photograph as a platform for social justice and cultural change.”

—LaToya Ruby Frazier, from a conversation with Bryan Stevenson at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, November 11, 2021

“Narrative work is how Parks changed hearts and minds. You can change laws, but if you don’t kind of work on people and the psychology behind bigotry and exclusion, then you’re not going to make any progress.”

—Bryan Stevenson, *A Choice of Weapons: Inspired by Gordon Parks*