



PRESS RELEASE

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The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Opens New In-Person Exhibition in Harlem on February 1, 2024:

The Ways of Langston Hughes:

Griff Davis and Black Artists in the Making

February 1– July 8, 2024

[New York, (NY), USA] - January 25, 2024

Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives in partnership with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture will explore the 20-year global friendship between renowned poet Langston Hughes (1901 - 1967) and internationally recognized pioneer photographer, filmmaker, and U.S. Senior Foreign Service Officer Griffith J. Davis (1923 - 1993) in the new exhibition [*The Ways of Langston Hughes: Griff Davis and Black Artists in the Making*](#).

The exhibition offers a black and white photographic look at Hughes, the Poet Laureate of Harlem and champion of Black artists across generations and disciplines—including Dizzy Gillespie, Dorothy West, and Arna Bontemps. *The Ways of Langston Hughes* will be on display in the Schomburg Center's



Griff Davis (left) and Langston Hughes (right) read Ebony Magazine, 1947. Photo Credit: Griff Davis. Copyright: Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives. All Rights Reserved.

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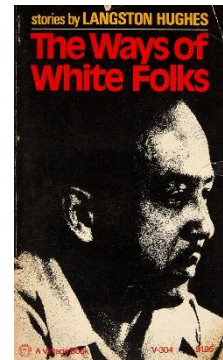
@griffdavis418

Latimer Gallery from February 1 - July 8, 2024. The official opening of the exhibition is on Langston Hughes' birthday, February 1, at 5:00 P.M. (ET).

The celebration of Langston Hughes' birthday takes place during the 100th birthday year of Griff Davis and the 30th Anniversary of Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives. The exhibition illustrates through photographs and personal correspondence how Mr. Hughes and Mr. Davis each helped the other pursue their respective dreams across the African Diaspora. The Schomburg exhibition is among 7 exhibitions currently displaying Griff Davis's photographs in 4 countries (United States of America, Canada, France, and Liberia) on 3 Continents (Europe, Africa, and North America). (See full list of exhibitions, documentaries, magazine articles and awards at www.griffdavis.com)

Griff Davis first met Langston Hughes as a student in Mr. Hughes' Creative Writing class at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) in Griff Davis's final semester at Morehouse College in 1947. Already the campus photographer, Mr. Hughes hired Griff to be his photographer during his stay in Atlanta. During this time, Griff Davis took the iconic photograph of Langston Hughes sitting at his typewriter that became the cover of Mr. Hughes's book "*The Ways of White Folks*".

Upon graduation, Griff Davis became the first Roving Editor for Ebony Magazine at the recommendation of Langston Hughes to John H. Johnson, Founder and Publisher of Ebony Magazine. Mr. Hughes also wrote Davis's recommendation letter to attend Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in the Class of 1949. While attending Columbia as the only African American student in the class, Griff Davis rented a room in Mr. Hughes' Harlem home. During this time, Griff Davis accompanied Mr. Hughes on his assignments as his photographer. He later used Mr. Hughes's home as his mailing address while working as the first and only African American international freelance photojournalist for Black Star Publishing Company, a New York stock photo agency.



The Ways of Langston Hughes: Griff Davis and Black Artists in the Making is adapted from the traveling exhibition *Griff Davis-Langston Hughes, Letters, and Photographs, 1947 – 1967: A Global Friendship*, which originated at the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts (FMoPA). In this exhibition, Griff Davis's photography is complemented by personal correspondence between him and Hughes and archival collections from the Schomburg Center's five divisions: Manuscripts, Archives, & Rare Books, Photographs & Prints, Moving Image and Recorded Sound, Art & Artifacts, and Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference. Notable additions to the exhibition from the Schomburg's collections include a watercolor by Joseph Barker of Langston Hughes home on East 127th Street, a letter from Hughes to playwright Lorraine Hansberry, and four LPs of poetry - two featuring Hughes as a collaborator with actor and activist Harry Belafonte and poet, editor and cultural activist Margaret Danner.

Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives won Best Documentary Short for [Photos by Griff Davis.mp4](#) at the 2023 Studio City International Film and Television Festival. Griff Davis's photographs are permanently installed at the **Museum of Broadway** in Times Square, New York City; the **U.S. Supreme Court Archives** at the request of Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer;

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and the **U.S Embassy/Monrovia** at the request of then-U.S. Ambassador to Liberia Linda Thomas Greenfield. Griff Davis's 1948 photo of legendary painter Hale Woodruff is among award winning film director **Spike Lee's collection of historical photos** in his current exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum entitled "*Spike Lee: Creative Sources*". Spike Lee is a Morehouse College Alumnus and recipient of the same Bennie Trailblazer Award from Morehouse College years after Griff Davis received his in February 1993.

About the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Founded in 1925 and named a National Historic Landmark in 2017, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is one of the world's leading cultural institutions devoted to the preservation, research, interpretation, and exhibition of materials focused on African American, African Diasporan, and African experiences. As a research division of The New York Public Library, the Schomburg Center features diverse programming and collections totaling over 12 million items that illuminate the richness of global black history, arts, and culture. Learn more at schomburgcenter.org.

About The New York Public Library

For over 125 years, The New York Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for the people of New York and beyond. With over 90 locations—including research and branch libraries—throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, the Library offers free materials, computer access, classes, exhibitions, programming and more to everyone from toddlers to scholars. To offer this wide array of free programming, The New York Public Library relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support the Library at nypl.org/support.

About Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives

Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives (www.griffdavis.com) is dedicated to unearthing, preserving, researching, exhibiting and sharing the photographs and stories of Griff Davis's innovative and sophisticated body of work. He was an internationally recognized-pioneer African American photographer, photojournalist, and U.S. Senior Foreign Service Officer at the vortex of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and the Independence Movement of Africa with a particular focus on Africa, Europe, the U.S.A., and Mexico. The Archives encompass 55,000 photographs, films and a complementary explosion of written documentation in the forms of official and unofficial reports leading to policymaking, communications materials and correspondence involving institution building, historic leaders, and a host of notable people from across the globe.

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