

CARRBILL

The Carr Center Gallery | July 26 – September 2

THIS IS WHERE I'M AT
and this is what I'm doing



A DETROIT YOUTH PHOTOSTORY — ELONTE DAVIS



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“This is where I’m at, and this is what I’m doing.” The line is borrowed from a foreign film - an artless phrase uttered by a teen, in an attempt to explain that minors are products of circumstance. Who they are and who they become, is almost entirely commensurate to where they are...and with whom.

Children don’t control their environments, or the steps they take within the confines of a day. They are asked and taught to make right choices between each step, to govern their impulses and emotions and – in between all that is required in an ordinary day – they still manage to manifest hope, playfulness, and joy. From these experiences and spaces combined, our children are being cultivated and shaped. They are becoming the future.

Emerging as one of Detroit’s leading Black life photographers, Elonte Davis uses his camera to document these everyday flashes. Where they are and what they are doing determines what tomorrow looks like, not only for the young individuals, but for all of us. The power in Davis’ images should give us all pause to contemplate the significance and sanctity of each and every moment of our children’s lives.

**An Irwin House Gallery, Steed Society Art & Rolling Out Magazine project
presented in gratitude and partnership with The Carr Center.**



ELONTE DAVIS

Artist Statement

“I am a visual storyteller, using photography as my voice. Born and raised on the East Side of Detroit, my photos capture often overlooked and anonymous populations and magnify the unique characteristics of the city’s social and physical landscape. I connected with photography in 2016, while at Michigan Tech. By 2018, I gleaned the importance of documenting the beauty and humanity of everyday moments and, in an effort to harness Detroit’s diverse and authentic identity, I have not left the house without my camera since. My work is unstaged, intuitive, and centered around themes of urban life; often focusing on marginalized communities, family matters, and raw, unfiltered environments. As a product of ‘the streets’ with modest and fractured beginnings, I enjoy access to often guarded geographical, spiritual, and psychological spaces that allows for deeper intimacy with the people and places I photograph. I seek to reveal the souls of my subjects, the heart and joy of common conditions, and build bridges to and from unseen worlds.

Children are recurring muses in my practice, as they are pervasive in my communities and I recognize, from my own childhood adversity, the fragility of their freedoms, voices, and protection. I find life parallels in nature through photography, and zero in on honest vignettes in public locations and private affairs. The camera has become therapeutic, not only for me as the artist, but also for my subjects, who are able to see a light and strength in their images, not often granted by the wider world. I hope that my work illustrates the fullness and complexity of what it means to be a Detroiters, and what it means to be beautiful, Black, and resilient in America.”



Kristen Branch

ELONTE DAVIS

About the Artist

Photographer, Elonte Davis says he picked up a camera and never put it down. He carries the instrument like his keys – never leaving the house without it, capturing spontaneous, classified, and often unseen stories in Black life throughout each day. Davis harnesses an intimacy in his photos that can only be discerned from the nucleus of the culture, allowing him to offer a genuine sense of the breadth of Black Detroit. Through his lens, the invisible are seen, heard, and celebrated; their tales in earnest, revealed.

Davis exhibited for the first time in 2021 and has since shown throughout the city, including at the Detroit Historical Museum, Irwin House Gallery, Canfield Consortium, Riverside Detroit, and ImageWorks in Dearborn, Canfield Consortium and with Composing Detroit. Sought and collected for its raw honesty, Davis' work is in the prominent collections of the Heidelberg Project, Judge David and Linda Whitaker, Urge Imprint LLC, Irwin House Gallery, Canfield Consortium, and Steed Society Art. Some of his recent assignments have included work for the Motown Museum and Rolling Out Magazine. Elonte Davis was born on Detroit's East Side, where he continues to reside within a rich community of family and lifelong friends.

THIS IS WHERE I'M AT *The Partners*

This is where I'm at, and this is what I'm doing is a traveling exhibition that hopes to expand and encompass youth in urban landscapes across the country including, but not limited to New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. The exhibition has been organized and commissioned by Detroit's Irwin House Gallery with Steed Society Art and Rolling Out Magazine, in partnership with The Carr Center. Together, we hope that Davis' unfiltered photographic eye will engender empathy and appreciation between Greater Detroit's diverse populations, while serving as a historical record of life in the city for many Detroit and turning an eye towards Black futures across the globe.



OMO MISHA *Curator*

Omo Misha is an independent curator and the Director of Irwin House Gallery in West End Detroit. She carries more than two decades of experience working in the arts and education on behalf of cultural institutions including City College Center for the Arts and CHRISTIE'S, New York. Her work lends itself towards supporting emerging artists and bridging gaps between Detroit and New York.

steed *Society* ART

The spirit of collaboration, inclusion, and storytelling are fundamental principles that Steed Society promotes. We celebrate and support creatives, cultural movements, and documentation of expressive cultural insights.

rollingout

Rolling Out Digital Magazine is a community of multi-hyphenate storytellers that live the culture they report on. The platform informs, inspires and enhances Black cultural development through knowledge and community engagement.



A new addition to Detroit's Cultural Center – the Carr Center Contemporary is a multipurpose art space inside the historic Park Shelton building (15 Kirby St, Detroit), right in the heart of the Midtown Cultural Center. The new space consists of a dedicated gallery and a performance studio. The gallery is designed to recognize and celebrate the perspectives, creativity and accomplishments of Black artists. The performance studio is designed for live performances, rehearsals, recordings and creating new work.



the **CARR**center

Black Artistic Excellence

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