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PHILADELPHIA'S TWENTIETH CENTURY BLACK HISTORY  
IS THE FOCUS OF NEW EXHIBITION

*A Million Faces: The Photography of John W. Mosley*  
*An Exhibition in Partnership with Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection,*  
*Temple University Libraries*

September 24, 2016-January 16, 2017

PHILADELPHIA, PA --- In partnership with the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Woodmere Art Museum is pleased to announce the exhibition *A Million Faces: The Photography of John W. Mosley* and a free public open house celebration on **Saturday, September 24 from 2-4 p.m. at Woodmere**. The exhibition's title was sparked by Mosley's own assessment that the positive achievement of his photography was to chronicle the black community of Philadelphia in his time through "nearly a million faces."

John W. Mosley (1907-1969) migrated to Philadelphia in 1934 during the Great Migration from Lumberton, North Carolina. From the late 1930s through the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1960s, he and his large-format accordion-style Graflex camera were a frequent presence in the lives of black Philadelphians. Self-taught, he was enthralled with the ability of photography to create a permanent visual record of living history and life's moments. Mosley was the longtime staff photographer

for the Pyramid Club and was also published in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, the *Pittsburgh Courier* and other black newspapers along the East Coast. He worked seven days a week, often shooting four events in a single day. His legacy of more than 300,000 photographs is preserved in the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries. This exhibition presents over 100 photographs (many of them never shown in public before) and a retrospective view of Mosley's practice, with attention to his point of view as an artist.

"Mosley is an extraordinary artist and storyteller," says William Valerio, Director and CEO of Woodmere. "Taken together, Mosley's photography offers a distinct Philadelphia story, representing Philadelphia's black community with complexity and joy, all in the difficult context of a segregated society."

Included in the exhibition are photographs of glamorous women, politicians, churchgoers, agrarian workers, and beachcombers, as well as civil rights leaders like Dr. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cecil B. Moore and celebrities, artists, and sports figures, including Joe Frazier, Muhammad Ali, Lena Horne, Roy Campanella, Marian Anderson, Jackie Robinson, Bill Cosby, Dox Thrash, Duke Ellington, Wilt Chamberlain, Ella Fitzgerald, and many others.

Visitors to the exhibition will be encouraged to share information and tell their own stories as they relate to Mosley's photographs. Visitors to the Woodmere website will see a "Share Your Stories" prompt. Every Monday for the duration of the exhibition, selected photos will be highlighted on Woodmere's social channels inviting visitors to share their thoughts. Many of these additional stories will be collected in a catalogue that is intended to document both the exhibition and the community response to it.

Charles L. Blockson, Curator Emeritus of Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries says, "These photos are part of history and they belong to the future."

*A Million Faces: The Photography of John W. Mosley* demonstrates that these photos are also very much a part of our present.

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## Exhibition events

### OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, September 24, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

### LECTURES

**Saturday, October 15, 3:00 p.m.**

Black Philadelphia and the Spirit of Unity: Art and Culture

Presented by Diane D. Turner, PhD., curator, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries

**Monday, October 17, 1:30 p.m.**

A Literary Lens into the Photography of John W. Mosley

Presented by Crystal Lucky, PhD, associate professor, Department of English, Villanova University

### MUSIC

**Every Friday September 30-December 16, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**

Friday Night Jazz Celebrating Philadelphia Jazz

**Saturday, January 14, 2017, 5:00-7:00 p.m.**

Classical Saturday

Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. with soprano Valerie Gay

### ADULT PROGRAMS

**Thursday, November 3, 6:00-7:30 p.m.**

Art Dive: Visit to the Studio of Photographer Ron Tarver

**Sunday, January 15, 2017, 2:00 p.m.**

Charles L. Blockson on the Photography of John W. Mosley

Participants:

Charles L. Blockson, educator, author and founder of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries

Leslie Willis-Lowry, Archivist, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection

Deborah Willis, PhD., University Professor and Chair of the Department of Photography & Imaging, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University

**FAMILY HAPPENING (Free for all ages)**

**Monday, January 16, 2017, noon-4:00 p.m.**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Festival

Bring the family to Woodmere to celebrate MLK Day with a full schedule of storytelling, art making, and a special performance.

**About Woodmere Art Museum**

Housed in a 19th-century stone mansion on six acres in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia, Woodmere tells the stories of the art and artists of Philadelphia. The Museum first opened its doors to the public in 1910. The building, grounds, and core of the permanent collection are the gifts of Charles Knox Smith (1845 – 1916). A passionate collector of contemporary art in his day, Smith was a civic leader of wealth and stature, serving on Philadelphia’s Common Council (the precursor to today’s City Council). Born of modest means, Smith’s first job was that of “grocer’s boy,” but he eventually built a successful mining company that was active in Mexico. He lived in downtown Philadelphia most of his life and purchased the Woodmere estate in 1898 with the grand ambition of providing a spiritual experience to the people of Philadelphia through encounters with great works of art in the context of the green beauty of the Wissahickon and Chestnut Hill. Woodmere continues to honor and interpret Smith’s vision of bringing art and nature together, and in recent years has acquired important examples of outdoor sculpture. Woodmere’s Collection consists of more than 6,000 works of art. Exhibitions and education programs “tell the stories” of the artists of Philadelphia, with special attention to 19<sup>th</sup>-century landscape painting, the circle of Violet Oakley, the circle of Arthur B. Carles, and Philadelphia’s unique brand of modernism. Woodmere’s collection can be viewed online, and the museum encourages artists and their friends and families to use our website to share information about works in the collection.

Studio classes, family activities, tours, lectures, music and film programs, and other special events are scheduled throughout the year.

The Museum is open to the public Tuesday – Thursday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. – 8:45 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission is \$10; FREE

on Sunday. For more information: [woodmereartmuseum.org](http://woodmereartmuseum.org)

### **About Temple University Libraries**

Temple University Libraries serve as trusted keepers of the intellectual and cultural record—collecting, describing, providing access to, and preserving a broad universe of materials, including physical and digital collections, rare and unique books, manuscripts, archives, ephemera and the products of scholarly enterprise at Temple. We are committed to providing research and learning services, to providing open access to our facilities and information resources, and to fostering innovation and experimentation. The Libraries serve Temple’s students, researchers, teachers and neighbors on Main, Center City and Health Sciences Center campuses in Philadelphia and on our Ambler and Harrisburg campuses.