

## *Patric McCoy: Take My Picture*

Exhibition of Poignant Images Provides a Rich Document of 1980s Black Gay Chicago

On View at Wrightwood 659 in Chicago, April 14 - July 15, 2023



(CHICAGO, IL, February 15, 2023) – *Patric McCoy: Take My Picture* features a selection of 50 striking photographic portrayals of gay Black men taken on the streets of Chicago in the 1980s. These photographs were shot by Patric McCoy, Chicago native, retired environmental scientist, and noted collector of African American art, who traveled around Chicago, often on his bike, always with his camera.

Installed on the second floor of Wrightwood 659, *Patric McCoy: Take My*

*Picture* is on view from April 14 to July 15, 2023.

This exhibition is presented by Alphawood Exhibitions at Wrightwood 659.

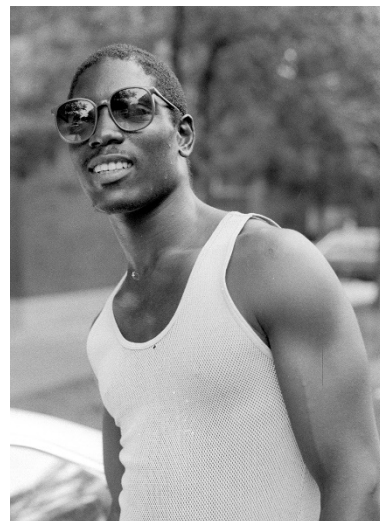
Over a crucial ten-year period, McCoy shot thousands of images—always at the subjects' request—which form a rich document of 1980s Black gay Chicago. *Take My Picture* features a selection of some 50 black-and-white and color photographs from this decade, by the end of which thousands would die of HIV/AIDS, including many of McCoy's friends, lovers, and subjects. McCoy's subjects are neither posed nor directed; each has agency over how he is seen, elevating his humanity, inverting and subverting the viewer's gaze. *Take My Picture* can be seen as a poignant marker of place, time, and memory; an altar to those lost.

The exhibition is curated by Juarez Hawkins, artist, educator, and curator, who noted, "McCoy and his camera fulfilled an unspoken need for Black men to be *seen*. Seen by someone who did not objectify them as 'Other', but an insider who allowed them, paraphrasing Langston Hughes, to be their 'beautiful black selves'."

The Rialto Tap, a now defunct gay bar in the South Loop of Chicago, attracted McCoy's muses. Open around the clock, the bar packed in men from all walks of life: unhoused people, downtown professionals, drag queens, gangsters, "buppies," and others. The Rialto was one of few places where black men could socialize with other black men; at the time, many "mainstream" gay bars were unwelcoming to men of color.

### About Patric McCoy

Patric McCoy is a retired environmental scientist in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Regional Office in Chicago. He became a national expert in enforcing air pollution regulations against the petroleum refining industry and was the recipient of numerous awards from the Department of Justice and the USEPA for that work. He has been collecting contemporary African American art for 50 years and has a collection of more than 1,300 pieces of fine art, 90% produced by Chicago artists. In 2003 he co-founded Diasporal Rhythms, a not-for-profit 501(c)3 arts organization that promotes the collection by individuals and



institutions of art from the African diaspora. He leads the organization in achieving its goals by organizing exhibitions, seminars, studio visits and home tours of collections which showcase the artists being collected in African American communities. In 2010, Mr. McCoy established an art trust to leave his art collection and other items from his estate to Diasporal Rhythms.

### Also on View at Wrightwood 659

Running concurrently with *Patric McCoy: Take My Picture* are two additional exhibitions: *Kongkee: Warring States Cyberpunk* and *Shahidul Alam: Singed But Not Burnt*.

### About Wrightwood 659

Founded in 2018, Wrightwood 659 is a private, non-collecting institution devoted to socially engaged art and architecture. Wrightwood 659 was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Tadao Ando, who transformed a 1920s residential building with his

signature concrete forms and poetic treatment of natural light. Located in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood and acclaimed as "a hidden treasure," Wrightwood 659's soaring and light-filled galleries offer both intimate and monumental experiences as visitors engage with the pressing issues of our time. Exhibitions are presented by Alphawood Exhibitions at Wrightwood 659. For additional information: <https://wrightwood659.org>.

### **About Alphawood Exhibitions**

Alphawood Exhibitions is an affiliate of Alphawood Foundation, a Chicago-based, grant-making private foundation working for an equitable, just, and humane society.

### **New Hours of Operation (Starting April 14, 2023)**

Thursdays 1-8 pm; Fridays 12noon-7 pm; Saturdays 10 am-5 pm

### **Tickets**

Admission for all three exhibitions is \$15 and is available online only at <https://tickets.wrightwood659.org/events>. Tickets go on sale March 16, 2023. Please note, admission is by advance ticket only. Walk-ups are not permitted.

### **COVID-19 Response**

We require all staff and guests to be fully vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19. By entering Wrightwood 659, you warrant to us that you are fully vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19. We reserve the right to ask guests to produce evidence of their vaccination.

Masks are required throughout the gallery. <https://wrightwood659.org/terms-and-conditions/health-safety/>.

#### National Media Contact

Ennis O'Brien

Betsy Ennis: [betsy@ennisobrien.com](mailto:betsy@ennisobrien.com) | +1 917.783.6553

Stephanie Markovic: [stephanie@ennisobrien.com](mailto:stephanie@ennisobrien.com) | +1 347.628.4688

#### Chicago Media Contact

The Silverman Group

Beth Silverman: [beth@silvermangroupchicago.com](mailto:beth@silvermangroupchicago.com) | +1 312.560.4783

Louise Yingduo Liu: [louise@silvermangroupchicago.com](mailto:louise@silvermangroupchicago.com) | +1 312.961.9290

### **Images**

*Cream and Green*, 1985, by Patric McCoy, Courtesy of the artist.

*Jeff*, 1985, by Patric McCoy, Courtesy of the artist.

*Two Young Men and Waves*, 1985, by Patric McCoy, Courtesy of the artist.