



The Institute of International
Humanitarian Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
2546 Belmont Ave, Bronx, NY, 10458

CHESTER HIGGINS' PHOTO EXHIBIT, *INTIMACY OF PRAYER*, IS
FEATURED AT THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN
AFFAIRS AND ALSO MARKS 45 YEARS OF LEGENDARY AFRICAN
PHOTOGRAPHY.

Rose Hill campus, Thursday, April 11, 2024

The Fordham University community and photography fans from around New York gathered for an intimate opening reception inside Canisius Hall at Fordham's Rose Hill campus. It was a rainy evening filled with warm, enriching conversations and passionate lessons from Chester.

"Your best photographs are of your subject matter. So, you should get to know your subjects". Chester said as he looked into the eyes of his audience members. Family members and even strangers were often the subjects of Chester's powerful shots. "No one wants to have their picture taken during a private moment...so it was important that I gained trust".

Brendan Cahill, Executive Director of the IIHA, wrapped up the gallery's reception around 8 PM with, "Chester's story goes back decades... it's an honor to finally show your work". Behind Brendan was one of the exhibit's most powerful photographs: a woman dressed in white praying on the ground, surrounded by popcorn. "This photo," Chester said in newfound awe - even though the photo was taken 24 years ago in 1990- "was a ceremony for cleansing in West Africa." Chester is referring to the photo titled *Candoble Worshipper*, which can be viewed [here](#).

The opening reception on April 11 was not the end of the celebration and appreciation of the *Intimacy of Prayer*. A moderated discussion with Mark L. Chapman, Associate Professor of African and African American Studies at Fordham, and Chester Higgins will be hosted early next month, followed by a closing reception at the Refuge Gallery on June 15. A recorded interview will also be featured on jiharefugegallery.org. The *Intimacy of Prayer* exhibit at Refuge Gallery is open for public viewing Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 2pm-4pm until June 15th.

Additional remarks from **Brendan Cahill**

*Tonight is the opening of a wonderful small exhibit by the esteemed photographer Chester Higgins. Entitled **The Intimacy of Prayer**, these images were taken in the United States, Africa and the MENA region. Please refer any colleagues or students, and we'd be grateful if you'd visit. More on Chester's biography [here](#) and [here](#). The exhibition was curated by Mr Joel De Andrade, who joins the Institute as our new Curatorial Fellow. He has been assisted by a remarkable Fordham student, Noel Bernard, who has joined as our Graphic Designer. Lily Egan is our Communications Officer. It will be available for viewing until June 15.*

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Chester's exhibition marks the return of our [Refuge Gallery](#), an important aspect of the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA) which, together with our popular podcast, [Humanitarian Fault Lines](#), allows us to further serve the University community (and its overall mission and vision) in an extracurricular way, acting as a bridge between academia and the world of crises outside our walls.

The Refuge Gallery - and the Institute - have worked well because of many years of collaboration and cooperation - past exhibitions have traveled to Yale, Brown, Colby College and others, and a catalog will be produced for this if you're not able to join us. If you would like to collaborate, or have ideas for future exhibitions, please reach out to me.

As always, I'd also like to thank the Refuge Gallery Board -

*Joseph Lawton, Fordham University Department of Visual Arts
Stephan Apicella-Hitchcock, Fordham University Department of Visual Arts
Anibal Pella Woo, Fordham University Department of Visual Arts
Jennifer Udell, Fordham University Curator of University Art
Michael Kamber, Founder and Creative Director of the Bronx Documentary Center
Thomas Lecky, Appraiser and Proprietor, Riverrun Books & Manuscripts
John O'Neill, Curator of Books and Manuscripts, The Hispanic Society of America
Robert Nickelsberg, Photographer*

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About the Refuge Gallery at the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs

Every semester, the IIHA hosts art exhibitions on humanitarian topics in Canisius Hall Gallery, showcasing the work of photographers, painters, and other artists who highlight humanitarian and social justice issues in their work.

The mission statement and vision for the gallery is:

The Canisius Hall Gallery serves as a venue for exhibitions of artistic work relating to humanitarian and social justice issues. Using art as a means to illuminate, educate and provoke, the Gallery seeks to bring the Fordham community closer to the injustices experienced by our fellow global citizens.

Our vision is to create a stimulating environment encouraging cultural and artistic inquiry through a social justice lens for our students, neighbors, artists, and the humanitarian sector – not only at the Institute, but at Fordham University as a whole.

Past exhibitions have included [Horrors of War: From Goya to Nachtwey](#) and [No Safe Harbor](#) by Getty Images photographer Bob Nickelsberg.

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Directions to the gallery can be found [here](#).



By Joseph Lawton

Pictured: Betsy Higgins, Chester Higgins, Brendan Cahill, Joel De Andrade (curator)



By Lily Egan

Pictured: Chester Higgins

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