



**HARLEM, N.Y.** - The world record for a single photograph auctioned at the famed Christie's auction house was created by James Van Der Zee. The photograph that sold set a world record in 2015 for a price of \$52,000. The original estimate at pre-sale was \$7,000-9,000." The photograph taken at West 127th Street in Harlem, NY, 1932 is untitled.

James Van Der Zee (1886-1983) started his photography career in New Jersey as a photographer's assistant and eventually graduated to a portrait photographer during the 1920's & 1930's, in the time period known as the Harlem Renaissance. He was noted to photograph Harlemites of all backgrounds and occupations. His famed photographs were of the African-American middle-class life. The untitled photo shows a couple with their raccoon coats posed with their Cadillac. Van Der Zee often carefully posed his subjects and ensured the composition of the photo was just right for the viewer to have the same experience that he was having while composing the shot.

He was eventually evicted from his Harlem residence and moved to the Bronx. His wife died and Van Der Zee lived in very poor circumstances until 1978.

Gallery director Donna Mussenden took up his cause and helped Van Der Zee to structure his home and organize public appearances. The two married in the same year of 1978. With this new revitalization, Van Der Zee worked with a new wave of celebrity portraits. Some of the luminaries he captured included, Lou Rawls, Cicely Tyson and Jean Michael Basquiat.

In 1981, Van Der Zee filed a suit to reclaim more than 50,000 images from the Studio Museum of Harlem. He had previously signed away his rights to the images after his eviction from Harlem. The case was settled with half of the work being returned to the photographer's estate, and the remainder being retained by the museum and the James Van Der Zee Institute. Van Der Zee received several accolades upon his



Van Der Zee was also a master at retouching photos on the actual negative, making his subjects more glamorous than they really were. One of his clients complained and said, "This doesn't really look like me" He replied, "This is how I create, it is just me.". Through this art form of touching the negatives he could also add to the photographs images that were not present at the time they were shot. For example the wedding photo to the right has a ghosted image of a little girl sitting on the floor holding a doll. This was Van Der Zee's way of predicting the future or planting what would be his thought of a blessing to the couple. This was all done without the aid of computers.

He took over 70,000 pictures, mostly indoor portraits, and labeled each of his photos with a signature and date. This was very important for future documentation. His celebrity photography included but was not limited to Florence Mills, Hazel Scott and Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, and Marcus Garvey.

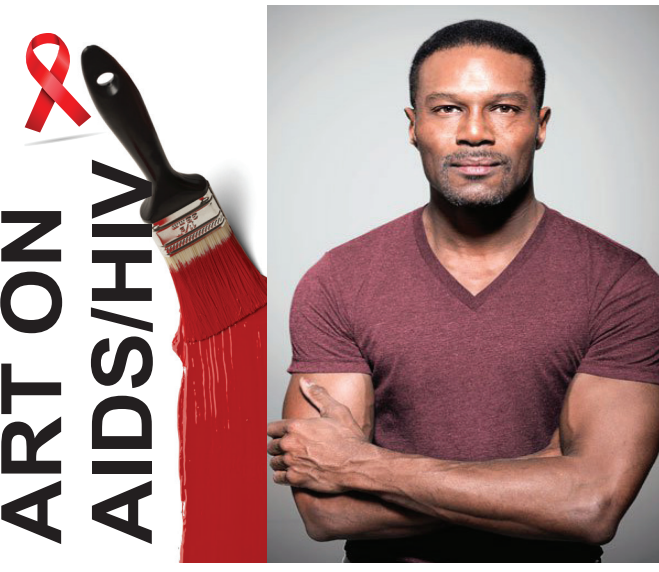
In 1969, the Metropolitan Museum of Art mounted an exhibition featuring Van Der Zee, Harlem on My Mind, bringing the photographer and his work new attention.

When the personal camera was invented it posed a financial hardship on Van Der Zee as a studio photographer. Although he had this financial hardship, he was still able to make some money on photo restoration and mail order sales.



return to the spotlight. He was honored with becoming a permanent fellow of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His work continues to be celebrated today.

**Artists of all ages have a message to share in helping eradicate this epidemic that is affecting our community. Broward County has the highest AIDS Rates in the USA!**



" Long before he died, Duane Cramer's father taped a note to the wall, which read, "Quond non est in libro, non est in mondo" ("What is not documented does not exist"). Joe J. Cramer was a trailblazer, a Black Ph.D. in theoretical accounting who served as an associate dean at Howard University. He also died of AIDS complications in 1986, a shock to Cramer's entire family.

Cramer, now 50, was affected both by the death of his father — a man he still calls his best friend — and by that tiny note taped to the wall with a phrase that has shaped his life, career, and activism. After stints as an executive at Xerox and a marketing guru, Cramer became a world-renowned photographer.

Exactly 10 years after his father's death, Cramer, then 34, found out he too was HIV-positive. He told his former partner and his sisters, but he waited a year to tell his mother, Beedie Brazos-Cramer, a conversation that's documented in the short film Tell Me, directed by Veronica Deliz, a part of the HIV Story Project.

"It was clear the only way we're going to stop this disease is to talk about it, and the only way I was going to be able to fully interact with my family was to be honest," he says, "so that they could continue to support and love me as they always had done." SOURCE: : HIVPlusmag.org