

The Pam Francis Portraits

By Christine Starkman



Pam Francis Wilson was born in Houston, Texas. She graduated with a BFA in studio art specializing in photography and graphic design in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin in the spring of 1979.

The Estate of Pam Francis Wilson will establish a charitable fund in Photography to promote the medium's impact on contemporary art and culture. Details will follow at a later date.

Pam Francis Photographs will be the first retrospective exhibition organized at the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston on the work of Pam Francis (1954–2020). On display September 29 to October 6, 2021, the exhibition will feature iconic artworks depicting her technical mastery of luminous lighting and creative artistry spanning her thirty-year career. Considered one of the top editorial and advertising photographers in Houston, Francis earned the sought-after covers and featured articles of *Texas Monthly*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, *Time*, *Homes and Gardens*, and corporate magazines (Continental Airlines, Enron). The list of who's who includes three presidents of the United States (George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, Barack Obama), a secretary of state (James Baker), mayors (Annis Parker and Lee Brown), hall-of-fame and Olympic athletes (Hakeem Olajuwon, Carl Lewis, Nolan Ryan, Mary Lou Retton), Grammy Award winners (Lyle Lovett, Destiny's Child), American Music Award winners (LeAnn Rimes, Hank Williams Jr.), southern rap artists (Bun B, Pimp C, ESG, Slim Thug, Lil' O, Lil' Flip, Lil' Keke, Big Moe, and UGK), CEOs and entrepreneurs (Jim Goode, Mark Cuban, Tillman Fertitta, Oscar Wyatt, Jack Sweeney, Michael Dell, Ken Lay).

Works on view trace Francis's development as a remarkable talent, capturing portraits that visually chronicle the defining moments and key protagonists of the decades. Over the course of her career, Francis became an important part of the changing cultural role of photography as an artistic medium. The images reveal her discipline and conceptual rigor in converging modes of portraiture and photojournalism with profound authenticity and sly wit. The exhibition also includes Francis's photographs of her favorite artists like Lyle Lovett and Hank Williams Jr., among others.

Christine Starkman, guest curator, is a contemporary art curator interested in the global, transnational, and transcultural histories of modern and contemporary art between Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. She has been a researcher and curator at three major encyclopedic museums: Art Institute of Chicago, Cleveland Museum of Art, and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She has an M.A. in Japanese art and architecture from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and did Ph.D. coursework in art history at Rice University.



Mayor Annise Parker, 2009

Annise Danette Parker (b. 1956), American politician, served as the sixty-first mayor of Houston, Texas (2010-2016), at-large member of the Houston City Council (1998-2003), and city controller (2004-2010). She was one of the first openly gay mayors of a major U.S. city.



Renu Khator

Renu Khator, Chancellor of the University of Houston System and President of the University of Houston (2008-).



Carl Lewis, 2006

Fredrick Carlton Lewis (b. 1961), American former track and field athlete who won nine Olympic gold medals and one Olympic silver medal (Los Angeles, Seoul, Barcelona, and Atlanta Olympic Games), and ten World Championship medals, 1970-1996. He set world records in 100m, 4 x 100m, and 4 x 200m relays.



Destiny's Child, 2000

American musical group with Kelendria Trene Rowland (b. 1981), Beyoncé Giselle Knowles Carter (b. 1981), and Michelle Williams (b. 1979). Destiny's Child signed with Columbia Records in 1996 and recorded Say My Name, 2000; Jumpin' Jumpin, 2000; Independent Woman, 2000. They won four Billboard Music Awards, 2000, and two Grammy Awards, 2001.

Charles Bolden, 2011

Major General Charles Frank Bolden, Jr. (b. 1946), twelfth administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (2009-2017), former astronaut who flew in four space shuttle missions, and 1968 U.S. Naval Academy graduate.





Jim Goode, 2004

James Douglas Goode (1944-2016), owner of the Goode Company Restaurant Group. As of 2012 it included Goode Co. Barbecue, Goode Co. Taqueria, Goode Co. Seafood, and Goode Co. Armadillo Place.

Lyle Lovett, 2012

Lyle Pearce Lovett (b. 1957), American singer, songwriter, actor, and record producer. He has recorded thirteen albums, released twenty-five singles, and won four Grammy Awards.

