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## WEEKEND Arts



Stephen Shames

### 'THE BLACK PANTHERS: VINTAGE PRINTS BY STEPHEN SHAMES'

Toward the end of the civil rights movement Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in 1966 in Oakland, Calif. In hindsight the party had a fairly reasonable agenda for social change and the empowerment of African-Americans — employment, education, decent housing, social justice and political representation — but it was branded as a shadowy revolutionary organization and a threat to national security. This new exhibi-

tion commemorates the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party, bringing together almost 100 photographs of the group's leaders, demonstrations and other activities from about 1967 to 1973 by Stephen Shames, the party's unofficial official photographer. Most of the images are small black-and-white prints, but they have a disquieting, momentous presence. One especially powerful image, above, shows the militant posturing of a pair of Panther security guards (Glen Wheeler, left, and Claudia

Grayson) outside a funeral for a slain party member at a church in Oakland in 1971. Mr. Shames photographed not only the public face of the movement but also private moments, including secret meetings of Panther leaders and their home life. Simple but thoughtful, the photographs humanize the group whose driving ambition was equality. (Through May 26, Steven Kasher Gallery, 521 West 23rd Street, Chelsea, 212-966-3978, [stevenkasher.com](http://stevenkasher.com).)

BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO