

**BLACK PANTHERS 1968**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH-MARION BARUCH AND PIRKLE JONES



*"We photographed the Black Panthers from July to October of 1968, during the peak of a historic period and in the Bay Area, where the Black Panthers National Headquarters is located. We couldn't possibly photograph all the aspects of this virile, rapidly growing, and deep-rooted movement, but we can show you: this is what we saw, this is what we felt, these are the people."*

*Pirkle Jones and Ruth-Marion Baruch, 1969*

The Black Panther Party was one of many liberation movements taking shape in the 1960s. The creativity, imagination, and genius of young people around the world provided a moment of optimism, albeit in a time of war, that has not been matched since. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, students at Merritt College in Oakland, founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966. Kathleen Cleaver, the first woman to join the group, recalls the Panthers as "a mobilization of tremendously talented but very young Black people who had little financial and institutional resources, but we had unlimited imagination "We had to imagine how we could make a fundamental change in the United States that would make Black People's lives better." By 1968, however, optimism had taken some serious hits. FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover vilified the Black Panthers as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States." Huey Newton was awaiting trial that year for allegedly killing an Oakland police officer.

The photographs by Ruth-Marion Baruch and Pirkle Jones documenting the early days of the Black Panther Party and this significant movement in Bay Area history; stem from the artists' work with the Peace and Freedom Party, the photographic essay reflects a desire to capture in images a closer understanding of the Black Panthers and their organization. The work of Baruch and Jones stands in radical contrast to mass media images of the time depicting the Panthers as thugs, criminals, or dangerous subversives. Their pictures reflect the dignity and humanity that animated the young revolutionaries, and also suggest universal themes of family, commitment, and hope for the future.

A Greybull Press Book titled Black Panthers 1968 by Ruth-Marion Baruch and Pirkle Jones, with an introduction by Kathleen Cleaver is available.

**EXHIBITION INFORMATION**

Number of photographs: 45 (3 crates)  
Frame sizes: 35 frames @ 16x20 inches and 10 frames @ 20x60 inches  
Linear feet: 155  
Rental fee: \$3000 for 8 weeks  
Additional weeks may be booked for an extra 10% per week.