If you are going to Chicago, don't miss…The Dawoud Bey, Picturing People – an expansive career survey of Chicago-based photographer Dawoud Bey, May 13 – June 24, 2012, with an opening reception Sunday, May 13, from 4-7pm presented by The Renaissance Society. The artist will speak at 5pm. The Renaissance Society, an internationally renowned contemporary art museum, is located on the University of Chicago campus at Cobb Hall, 5811 S. Ellis Avenue, in Hyde Park.

Ranging from street photography to formal studio portraiture, Bey's body of work is distinguished for its commitment to portraiture as a means for understanding contemporary society.
Museum Director and Curator Susanne Ghez says, "Dawoud's portraits capture the essential characteristics of individuals, and at the same time draw out the complications and varieties of the communities in which people live – whether in Harlem, Atlanta, or Chicago." Bey began his career as a photographer in 1975 with a series of photographs, Harlem, U.S.A., that were later exhibited in his first one-person exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 1979. [In conjunction with The Renaissance Society's career survey, The Art Institute of Chicago will exhibit Harlem, U.S.A. for the first time in its entirety from May 12-September 9, 2012. For more information on the Harlem, U.S.A. exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago, please visit www.artinstituteofchicago.org]

Bey has since had numerous exhibitions worldwide and his works are included in the permanent collections of museums including the Art Institute and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, the Museum of Modern Art (NY), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,

the Whitney Museum of American Art, and others. The Walker Art Center organized a mid-career survey of his work, Dawoud Bey: Portraits 1975-1995, that traveled to institutions throughout the United States and Europe. Class Pictures: Photographs by Dawoud Bey was published by Aperture in 2007. In 2008, he completed Character Project, commissioned by USA Network and published by Chronicle Books in 2009. Dawoud Bey, Picturing People will encompass works representing these projects and will also debut photographs from a new series titled Strangers/Community, which brings together for a double portrait people from one community who were previously unknown to each other.

Bey is a Distinguished College Artist and a Professor of Art in the Photography Department at Columbia College Chicago, where he has taught since 1998.

"My work as an artist has been about giving ordinary people an enhanced presence in the world through my photographs. I see my work as a way to bring the human community into a conversation with itself. Hopefully through my photographs viewers come to know not only something about the people that I photograph, but something about themselves as well. My career survey at the Renaissance Society is an opportunity to sum up what I have been doing and thinking about for the past 36 years. It is an opportunity to see all of these photographs and ideas in relation to each other," said Bey.

The Renaissance Society is an internationally renowned non-collecting museum of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, commissions, publications, and interdisciplinary education programming, The Renaissance Society is engaged with the evolving question of what art is, and what art can be.

For more information on The Renaissance Society or Dawoud Bey, Picturing People, phone (773) 702-8670 or visit www.renaissancesociety.org.