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Contact:

Jerome Trahan | jerome@msarts.org

Director of Marketing + Communications

Kristi Bruister | kristi@msarts.org

Marketing + Public Relations Assistant

‘Southbound: Photographs of and about the New South’ now at Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience

A mind-opening exhibition at a groundbreaking facility celebrates today’s South through photography, video, digital media and literature.

MERIDIAN, Miss. (July 31, 2020) – “Southbound: Photographs of and about the New South” offers a fresh, surprising look at an iconic and misunderstood region. The exhibition runs through September 6 at the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience, a new kind of cultural and educational institution that honors Mississippi’s creative legends.

“Southbound” presents 56 photographers’ visions of the South over the first two decades of the 21st century. “The photographs echo stories told about the South as a bastion of tradition, as a region remade through Americanization and globalization, and as a land full of surprising scenes and colorful characters,” says the exhibition’s website. “The project’s purpose is to investigate the senses of place in the South that congeal, however fleetingly, in the spaces between the photographers’ looking, their images and our own preexisting ideas about the region.”

In addition to its 220 photographs, the exhibition features a commissioned documentary film by John David Reynolds, interactive digital maps created by Rick Bunch at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, an extensive website (southboundproject.org), and an exhibition catalog including images by all exhibiting artists and essays offering a range of perspectives about the South. The maps, collectively titled “Index of Southernness,” show geographical clusters within the United States of such regional characteristics as the locations of businesses with names containing “Southern” or “Dixie.”

“Each photographer presents us with a personal take on the South, one that challenges us to rethink how we see the region,” said William Ferris, professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ferris is an author, a film documentarian, a former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, a senior associate director of the Center for the Study of the American South, a former director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, a Grammy winner and the subject of a Mississippi Blues Trail marker.

The exhibition focuses on both the positive and less flattering aspects of life in the South. Art critic, editor and author Eleanor Heartney, a contributing editor for *Art in America*, said, “Revealed here is the dark

side of the human soul, but also flashes of hope and happiness bursting through in musical celebrations, joyful communal rituals and dusky skies darkened with flocks.”

The interactive exhibits of The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (known as The MAX) put the photographs and photographers in the context of the state’s overall creative legacy. The facility, in the heart of historic downtown Meridian, celebrates geniuses as diverse as B.B. King and Faith Hill, Morgan Freeman and Jim Henson, John Grisham and James Earl Jones, and Elvis and Oprah, as well as less famous but equally fascinating performers, writers and artists.

The MAX is open Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., and Sunday, 1-5 p.m. It is located at 2155 Front Street, Meridian, MS 39301. Street parking is available, with shops and restaurants within walking distance.

The exhibit is free to members, or with regular museum admission. For more information, see The MAX website, msarts.org.

“Southbound: Photographs of and about the New South” was organized by the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. Curators were Mark Sloan, director and chief curator of the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, and Mark Long, professor of political science at the College of Charleston.

Participating Artists

Mississippi Artists: Langdon Clay, Maude Schuyler Clay, Will H. Jacks, Kathleen Robbins, Euphus Ruth

- Shelby Lee Adams
- Rob Amberg
- Daniel Beltrá
- Rachel Boillot
- Sheila Pree Bright
- Lucinda Bunnan
- Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick
- Langdon Clay
- Maude Schuyler Clay
- Thomas Daniel
- Eliot Dudik
- Matt Eich
- Lisa Elmaleh
- Mitch Epstein
- McNair Evans
- Lucas Foglia
- Kyle Ford
- Preston Gannaway
- Alex Harris
- John Lusk Hathaway
- Titus Brooks Heagins
- Lauren Henkin
- Tim Hursley
- Jessica Ingram
- Will H. Jacks
- Daniel Kariko
- Tommy Kha
- Kevin Kline
- Stacy Kranitz
- Gillian Laub
- Deborah Luster
- Tammy Mercure
- Jeanine Michna-Bales
- Greg Miller
- Susana Raab
- Thomas Rankin
- Tamara Reynolds
- Jeff Rich
- Eugene Richards
- Kathleen Robbins
- Euphus Ruth
- Anderson Scott
- Jerry Siegel
- David Simonton
- Chris Sims
- Mike Smith
- Magdalena Solé
- Bill Steber
- Mark Steinmetz
- Brandon Thibodeaux
- Burk Uzzle
- Sofia Valiente
- Michelle Van Parys
- Jeffrey Whetstone
- Susan Worsham

About The MAX

[The MAX](#) showcases Mississippi’s Arts + Entertainment Experience in one immersive destination. Here, visitors of all ages explore the global impact of Mississippians on music, literature, art, entertainment and cuisine. The MAX honors our state’s creative legacy and inspires the next generation of creators through a unique experience of interactive exhibits. Come discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world’s greatest arts and entertainment icons — like Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Faith Hill, Sela Ward and Kermit the Frog, just to name a few.

The MAX is dedicated to keeping its facility and exhibits clean and safe. Visit our website for MAX@Home, an online series of lectures, classes, musical performances, and celebrity commentaries.

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To request additional information or resources, contact Jerome Trahan, Director of Marketing, at jerome@msarts.org