

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**First Major Exhibition of Southern Photography in More Than 25 Years Comes to the
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in October 2024**

The comprehensive survey, *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845*,
contemplates Southern identity through photography



The March from Selma, 1965, Matt Herron (American, 1931–2020), gelatin silver print, 7 1/2 x 13 11/16 in. High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Gift of Gloria and Paul Sternberg, 1999.154.5 © Matt Herron

Richmond, Virginia — The first major exhibition of Southern photography in more than 25 years, *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845*, will be on display at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond from Oct. 5, 2024, to Jan. 26, 2025.

A Long Arc comprises more than 175 years of photography from a broad swath of the American South — from Maryland to Florida to Arkansas to Texas and places in between. Visitors to the expansive exhibition will encounter everyday lives and ordinary places captured in evocative photos that contemplate the region’s central role in shaping American history and identity. The exhibition also examines the South’s critical impact on the development of photography.

“The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is excited to present *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845*, an astounding exhibition of powerful images of our shared Southern — and American — history by many of this country’s foremost photographers,” said the museum’s Director and CEO Alex Nyerges. “The exhibition also

includes a number of captivating images of Richmond and the Commonwealth from the museum's ever-growing collection of photographs."

A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845 is organized by the High Museum of Art (Atlanta, Georgia) and co-curated by Gregory Harris, the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family curator of photography at the High Museum of Art, and Dr. Sarah Kennel, the Aaron Siskind curator of photography and director of the Raysor Center for Works on Paper at VMFA.

"*A Long Arc* reckons with the region's fraught history, American identity and culture at large, asking us to consider the history of American photography with the South as its focal point," said Dr. Kennel. "The exhibition examines the ways that photographers from the 19th century to the present have articulated the distinct and evolving character of the South's people, landscape and culture."



Florida. Tomoka River. *The King's Ferry*, 1898, William Henry Jackson (American, 1843–1942), photochrom, 7 x 9 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of an Anonymous Donor, 2014.159

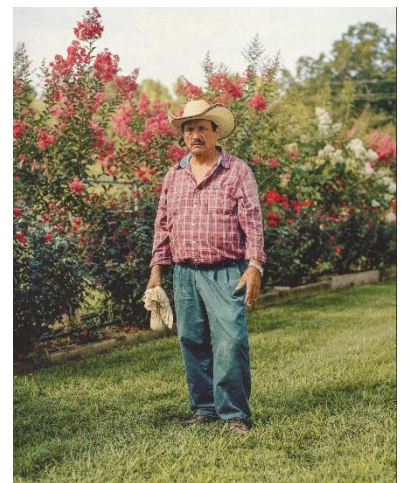


Allie Mae Burroughs, *Hale County, Alabama*, 1936, Walker Evans (American, 1903–1975), gelatin silver print, 9 5/8 x 7 7/8 in. Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Gift of Norman Selby (PA 1970) and Melissa G. Vail, 2020.31

More than 180 works of historical and contemporary photography are featured in *A Long Arc*, which includes many from VMFA's permanent collection.

Organized chronologically, *A Long Arc* opens with an exploration of the years from 1845 to 1865, where visitors will encounter compelling photographs made before and during the American Civil War. Photographers of this time, including Alexander Gardner and George Barnard, transformed the practice of the medium and established visual codes for articulating national identity and expressing collective trauma. Following the war, photographs made from 1865 to 1930 reveal the South's incomplete project of Reconstruction, including new industries, a rise of community-based photography studios, the erection of white supremacist monuments and scenes conveying social division.

With the emergence of documentary photography in the 1930s, photographs made in the South raised national consciousness around social and racial inequities. During this time, Farm Security Administration photographers working in the region, including Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and Marion Post Wolcott, defined a kind of documentary approach that dominated American photography for decades and recast a Southern vernacular into a new kind of national style.



Rose Grower, 2021, José Ibarra Rizo (American, born Mexico, 1992), inkjet print, 40 x 32 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2023.1343 © José Ibarra Rizo

During the 25 years following World War II, from 1945 to 1970, photography in the South was characterized by an incongruence between America's optimistic image of itself and the enduring shadow of Jim Crow-era segregation. Artists like Robert Frank, Clarence John Laughlin and Ralph Eugene Meatyard made jarring and unsettling photographs that revealed economic, racial and psychic dissonance at odds with conventional images of American prosperity, while photographs of the civil rights movements by Bruce Davidson, Danny Lyon, Doris Derby and James Karales galvanized and shocked the nation with raw depictions of violence and the struggle for justice.

Photography in the South exhibits a sense of reflection, return and renewal in the three decades following the tumult of the 1960s, as artists like Sally Mann, William Eggleston and William Christenberry created narrative, self-reflexive bodies of work that simultaneously sustained and interrogated the South's brutal histories and enduring cultural mythologies.



iHome, 2012, RaMell Ross (American, born 1982), inkjet print, 36 x 46 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2024.17 © RaMell Ross

A Long Arc concludes with a wide-ranging and provocative selection of photographs made in the past two decades. Artists like Richard Misrach, Lucas Foglia, Gillian Laub, An-My Lê, Sheila Pree-Bright, RaMell Ross and Jose Ibarra Rizo explore Southern history and American identity in the 21st century as forged by legacies of slavery and white supremacy, marked by economic inequality and environmental catastrophe and transformed by immigration, technology, urbanization, globalization and shifting ethnic, cultural, racial and sexual identities.

A complex and layered archive of the region, *A Long Arc* captures how the South has occupied an uneasy place in the history of American photography while simultaneously exemplifying regional exceptionalism and the crucible from which American identity has been forged over the past two centuries.

For more information about the exhibition *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845*, visit www.VMFA.museum.

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Featured Photographers

Photographic works by more than 120 artists are featured in *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845*, including George N. Barnard, William Eggleston, Mitch Epstein, Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Emmet Gowin, Dorothea Lange, Baldwin Lee, Tommy Kha, Sally Mann, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, Gordon Parks, P.H. Polk, RaMell Ross and Carrie Mae Weems, among others.

Two Photograph Exhibitions. One Ticket.

One ticket will enable visitors to see the two unique exhibitions *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845* and *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy*. Combined tickets are available for purchase at www.VMFA.museum: \$12 adults, \$10 for seniors 65+, and \$8 for youth 7–17 and college students with ID. Museums for All participants can purchase combined tickets to these two special exhibitions at the reduced price of \$2 each with a limit of four tickets per Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. Combined tickets to the two exhibitions are free for VMFA members and children ages 6 and under. As a participant of Blue Star Museums, VMFA also provides free tickets for all active duty, National Guard and Reserve military personnel and their immediate families.

Exhibition-Related Programs

VMFA will offer a variety of exhibition-related public events, programs and classes for all ages, including lectures, photography workshops and film screenings. An opening talk by Dr. Kennel is planned for Oct. 10, 2024. The complete list of public events and programs can be found at www.VMFA.museum.



2nd Regiment, United States Colored Light Artillery, Battery A: Ram, ca. 1864, Unidentified Photographer, albumen silver print, 5 5/16 x 7 1/4 in. High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Purchased with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.274-277

Exhibition Catalogue

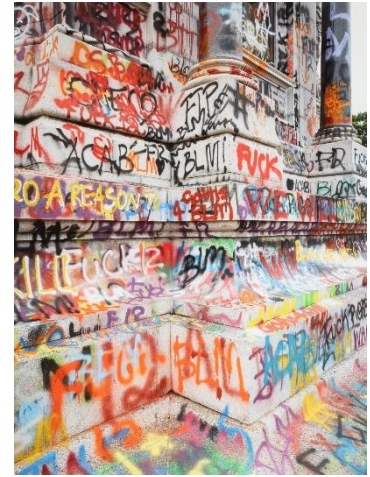
The exhibition catalogue, *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South Since 1845*, published by Aperture and the High Museum of Art, will be available to purchase in the [VMFA Shop](#). The 250-page hardcover book features photographs taken over 175 years of Southern history and includes essays by the exhibition curators, Harris and Dr. Kennel. Also included in the catalogue are essays by National Book Award recipient Dr. Imani Perry, the Carol K. Pforzheimer professor at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute and the Henry A. Morss, Jr. and Elisabeth W. Morss professor of studies of women, gender and sexuality and of African and African American studies at Harvard University; Makeda Best, deputy director of curatorial affairs, Oakland Museum of California; Dr. LeRon P. Brooks, associate curator for modern and contemporary collections at the Getty Research Institute; Rahim Fortune, photographer; Grace Elizabeth Hale, the Commonwealth professor of American studies and history at the University of Virginia; Maria L. Kelly, the High Museum's assistant curator of photography; Scott Matthews, professor of history at Florida State College; and Brian Piper, the Freeman Family curator of photographs, prints and drawings at the New Orleans Museum of Art.

Exhibition Sponsors

A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845 is sponsored in Virginia by the Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Exhibition Endowment; the Julia Louise Reynolds Fund; the Davenport Family Foundation; the Elisabeth Shelton Gottwald Fund; Mr. and Mrs. Charles N. Whitaker; Carol Ann Bischoff and Mike Regan; Nancy and Wayne Chasen; the Community Foundation for a greater Richmond; Anne and Gus Edwards; Tibby and David Ford; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Garner, Jr.; Dr. and Mrs. William V. Garner; Bertie Heiner; the Richard S. Reynolds Foundation; the Virginia Sargeant Reynolds Foundation; Michael Schewel and Priscilla Burbank; Mary and Don Shockey; YouDecide; Anne Battle and Leonard Slater; Kate Neale Cooper and Matt Cooper; Birch Douglass; the Gray-Nyerges Charitable Fund; Hamilton Beach Brands, Inc.; Adrienne Joseph; James W. Klaus; James Ludwig and Cynthia Cobbs; Alexandria Rogers McGrath; Teri Craig Miles; the Peachtree House Foundation; Tom Williamson and Janet Brown; Edie and Bob Cabaniss; Ann B. Carpenter in memory of Richard H. Carpenter, M.D.; Page and John Corey; Drs. Ronald A. and Betty Neal Crutcher; Dana Foundation, Inc.; Christopher English and Meda Lane; Eucharía "Ukay" Jackson and Richard Jackson, M.D.; Tammy and Brian Jackson; Arnel Manalo; Nancy and Tom L. McClandish; John McGurl and Michelle Gluck; Dr. and Mrs. Kent Minichiello; John and Michelle Nestler; Candace H. Osdene; Dr. and Mrs. Carl Patow; Celia Rafalko and Rick Sample; Ellen Ray, Main Street Law Offices; Reynolds Gallery; Agustin E. Rodriguez and Colleen Butler Rodriguez; Deborah and Mark Wlaz; and two anonymous donors. Marketing support is provided by the Charles G. Thalheimer Fund.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 6,000 years. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass nearly 50,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris and one of the nation's finest collections of American art. VMFA is also home to important collections of Chinese art, English silver, and French Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British Sporting and Modern and Contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin Wing



Lee Square, Richmond, Virginia, 2020, Kris Graves (American, born 1982), pigmented inkjet print, 40 x 30 in. High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Purchase with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, 2022.161 © Kris Graves

I after a transformative expansion, previously the largest in its history. A new expansion, the McGlothlin Wing II, is planned to open in 2028. Comprising more than 170,000 square feet, it will be the largest expansion in the museum's history and will make VMFA the fifth largest art museum in the United States.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone (804) 340-1400 or visit www.VMFA.museum.

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