



## Asheville Art Museum in Asheville, NC, Offers Photography Exhibition

Asheville Art Museum in Asheville, NC, will present *Gillian Laub's Southern Rites*, organized by the International Center of Photography, on view in the Museum's Appleby Foundation Exhibition Hall, from Apr. 1 through July 4, 2022.

American photographer Gillian Laub (born New York, 1975) has spent the last two decades investigating political conflicts, exploring family relationships, and challenging assumptions about cultural identity. In *Southern Rites*, Laub engages her skills as a photographer, filmmaker, and visual activist to examine the realities of racism and raise questions that are simultaneously painful and essential to understanding the American consciousness.

In 2002, Laub was sent on a magazine assignment to Mount Vernon, GA, to document the lives of teenagers in the American South. The town, nestled among fields of Vidalia onions, symbolized the archetype of pastoral, small town American life. The Montgomery County residents Laub encountered were warm, polite, protective of their neighbors, and proud of their history. Yet Laub learned that the joyful adolescent rites of passage celebrated in this rural countryside—high school homecomings and proms—were still racially segregated.

Laub continued to photograph Montgomery County over the following decade, returning even in the face of growing—and eventually violent—resistance from community members and local law enforcement. She documented a town held hostage by the racial tensions and inequities that scar much of the nation's history. In 2009, a few months after Barack Obama's first inauguration, Laub's photographs of segregated proms were published in the *New York Times Magazine*. The story brought national attention to the town and the following year the proms were finally integrated. The power of her photographic images served as the catalyst and, for a moment, progress seemed inevitable.

Then, in early 2011, tragedy struck the town. Justin Patterson, a twenty-two-year-old unarmed African American man—whose segregated high school homecoming Laub had photographed—was shot and killed by a sixty-two-year-old white man. Laub's project, which began as an



Gillian Laub, "Amber and Reggie, Mount Vernon, Georgia," 2011, inkjet print, 40 x 50 inches. © Gillian Laub, courtesy of Benrubi Gallery.

exploration of segregated high school rituals, evolved into an urgent mandate to confront the painful realities of discrimination and structural racism. Laub continued to document the town over the following decade, during which the country re-elected its first African American president and the ubiquity of camera phones gave rise to citizen journalism exposing racially motivated violence. As the Black Lives Matter movement and national protests proliferated, Laub uncovered a complex story about adolescence, race, the legacy of slavery, and the deeply rooted practice of segregation in the American South.

*Southern Rites* is a specific story about 21st century young people in the American South, yet it poses a universal question about human experience: can a new generation liberate itself from a harrowing and traumatic past to create a different future?

*Southern Rites* was curated by Maya Benton and organized by the International Center of Photography.

Established by artists and incorporated in 1948, the Asheville Art Museum is committed to being a vital force in community and individual development and to providing lifelong opportunities for education and enrichment through the visual arts. The Museum's mission is to engage, enlighten, and inspire individuals and enrich community through dynamic experiences in American art of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Museum is dedicated to advancing diversity, equity, access, and inclusion—now and in the future—and we welcome all visitors without discrimi-

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nation. The Museum acknowledges that it is situated upon the ancient, southern Appalachian ancestral homeland of the Cherokee Tribe and that this region is still the home of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians today. The Museum is a 501(c)(3)

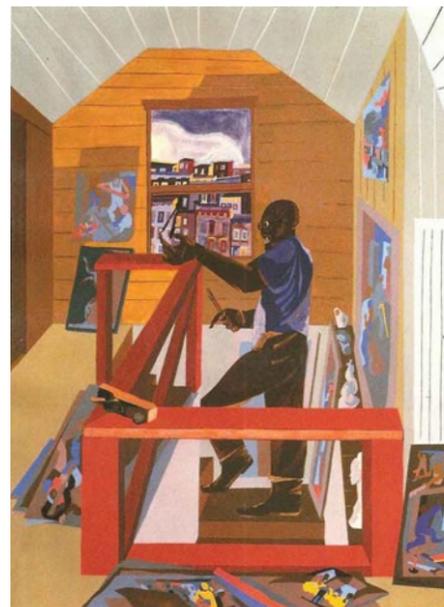
nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings or visit ([ashevilleart.org](http://ashevilleart.org)).

## Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center in Asheville, NC, Offers New Spring Exhibitions

The Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center in Asheville, NC, is presenting *Black Mountain College: Idea + Place*, on view in the Lower Level Gallery with a companion digital exhibition, on view through May 14, 2022.

How can an idea inform a place? How can a place inform an idea? Would Black Mountain College have had the same identity and lifespan if it had been located in the urban Northeast, the desert Southwest, or coastal California? How did BMC's rather isolated, rural, and mountainous setting during the era of the Great Depression and the Jim Crow South influence the college community's decision-making and the evolution of ideas upon which it was based?



Jacob Lawrence, "In the Studio", 1977. Lithograph, B.A.T. (final proof). Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center permanent collection. Purchase of BMCM+AC Board of Directors.

This exhibition seeks to delve into these questions and others by exploring the places of Black Mountain College: its two very different campuses, its influential



Hazel Larsen Archer, "Ray Johnson in Studies Building looking out over Lake Eden", ca. 1940s. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Hazel Larsen Archer.

predecessor the Bauhaus in Germany, and the post-BMC diaspora. The exhibition was curated by Alice Sebrell, Director of Preservation.

*adVANCE! Modernism, Black Liberation + Black Mountain College*, will be on view in the Center's Upper Level Gallery, with a companion digital exhibition, through May 14, 2022.

Featuring the work of contemporary sculptor Larry Paul King in conversation with Black Mountain College modernist masters including Jacob Lawrence, Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence, Josef Albers, Leo Krikorian, and Sewell Sillman. Premiering three Jacob Lawrence lithographs new to the BMCM+AC permanent collection.

*adVANCE!* celebrates Black Mountain College's role in early civil rights and the ongoing role of Black, modernist artists in the pursuit of liberation and justice.

*continued on Page 24*