

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART TO CELEBRATE
SOUTHERN PHOTOGRAPHER JACK LEIGH**

More than 30 black and white prints from the Museum's collection on view this spring

ATLANTA, Jan. 11, 2017 – This spring, the High Museum of Art will present “The Spirit of the Place: Photographs by Jack Leigh” (March 4 through June 11, 2017), an exhibition showcasing the lyrical work of this celebrated Savannah photographer.

Leigh (American, 1948–2004) belonged to a generation of Southern photographers who came of age in the 1970s, including William Christenberry and William Eggleston, whose work focused on the subtle beauty found in ordinary and out-of-the-way subjects of the American South. Born in Savannah, Ga., Leigh devoted his decades-long career to documenting the distinctive character of his home city, along with the marshlands, fishing villages and roadside towns of the coastal Lowcountry.

Leigh is perhaps best known for “Midnight” (1993), which graced the cover of John Berendt’s 1994 New York Times best-selling book “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.” “Midnight” will be on view in the exhibition alongside more than 30 additional prints drawn from the High’s permanent collection and a promised gift to the collection, many of which have not been shown before at the High.

Working exclusively in black and white, Leigh gravitated not just to the South’s landscape and aging architecture but particularly to its people, who possessed a deep connection to the land and sea. Many of his subjects—the oystermen, shrimp boat crews and residents of riverside hamlets—led a vanishing way of life as urbanization and industrialization became more prevalent across the South. Through his discerning photographs, Leigh sought to capture the spirit of these places and the people who embodied them.

“We are delighted to share these photographs with our visitors, which showcase not only the significant artistic prowess of a native Georgian but also one of the deepest strengths of the High’s collection, Southern documentary photography,” said Gregory Harris, the High’s assistant curator of photography.

This exhibition is on view in the Lucinda Weil Bunden Gallery for Photography on the Skyway Level of the High’s Wieland Pavilion.

About the High Museum of Art Photography Collection

The High is home to the most robust photography program in the southeastern United States. The Museum began acquiring photographs in the early 1970s, making it one of the earliest American art museums to commit to collecting the medium. Today, photography is the largest and fastest-growing collection at the High. With more than 6,000 prints, holdings focus on American work

of the 20th and 21st centuries, with special strength in modernist traditions, documentary and contemporary photography. Holdings include the most significant museum collection of vintage civil rights–era prints in the nation as well as important groups of photographs by Harry Callahan, Clarence John Laughlin, William Christenberry, Ralph Gibson, Richard Misrach, Walker Evans, Peter Sekaer, Abelardo Morell and Wynn Bullock. The collection also gives special attention to pictures made in and of the South, serving as the largest and most significant repository representing the region’s important contributions to the history of photography.

Since 1996, the High’s distinctive “Picturing the South” initiative has commissioned established and emerging photographers to produce work inspired by the area’s geographical and cultural landscape. Past participants include Sally Mann, Dawoud Bey, Emmet Gowin, Alex Webb and Alec Soth, whose commissions have all been added to the High’s permanent collection.

About the High Museum of Art

The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 15,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American art; a substantial collection of historical and contemporary decorative arts and design; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography, folk and self-taught art, and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists. Through its education department, the High offers programs and experiences that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit high.org.

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