MALE
Mine

You keep looking for it
digging for it scratching for it
down there hunched-over in the dark
cave-brained, cramped, sucking dust
but it is just
a hard thing to run up on
seems like
down where the canary dies
its tiny heart
just a hard thing to run up on
till one day you haul up out of the pit
shielding your eyes from the light
happen to tilt your chin
and, be damn
there it is
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I grew up in a household where art was encouraged and it was assumed that we needed to change the world. I photographed in the streets of Brooklyn, NYC, and a number of civil rights and peace demonstrations throughout the 1960s. I began a project that would snowball into spanning forty-one years of visiting and photographing Appalachian coal miners, their families, neighbors, and environment, hidden from most of the nation in small towns and villages, tucked away in the hollows of the steep mountains and rolling hills of West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia, and western Pennsylvania.

During summer, and other school break vacations from my New York City high school teaching, I drove throughout the Appalachian coalfields, visiting the communities where some of the great struggles of miners had taken place: Mingo, Logan, and Raleigh Counties; Paint and Cabin Creek, Matewan, Williamson, and Scotts Run; West Virginia, Martin, Pike, Letcher and Harlan Counties, Kentucky; Cokeburg, Marianna, and Ellsworth, western Pennsylvania.

The more I saw, the more I realized there was to learn and see. Once the hunting grounds of the Cherokee and other indigenous groups, Appalachia became the home of colonists seeking to escape the oppressive rule of the British. Later, it was marked by routes and hideouts for slaves escaping on the Underground Railroad. Appalachia was a crucible of abolitionism, where 250,000 southern mountaineers volunteered for the Union army during the Civil War. In the later part of the 19th, railroads followed by large mines were built along with company-owned housing, schools, stores, etc.

Recruited from the surrounding substance farms, towns, and villages from all over Europe, African American communities in the south, and southern prison conscript labor, miners have toiled underground, facing the daily threat of lung disease, injury, and death, to feed their families and to provide the coal that helped to build and sustain our nation. Since then, miners have struggled collectively, despite the resistance of some of the most powerful industrial and corporate forces on earth, to make a better life for themselves, their families, their communities, and the American people.

In the summer of 1971, I rented a room from George Johnson, a retired miner, so that I could continue my work. While photographing and talking with miners waiting for their shift to begin, this older miner’s coal dust-stained face caught my eye. When I asked about the particular style of his helmet, Kosto explained it was the old, “turtle-shell” from 1932. He gave me permission to take his portrait so I initially made a few hand-held photographs of him. Realizing the quality of the image, I wanted to use a camera that afforded more description. I asked him to wait while I hurried back to the parking lot below so I could retrieve my 5” x 7” view camera and tripod. You wouldn’t know it from the image but there were high voltage electric cables used to power the man-trip coal cars, slightly above and off to the side; it felt dangerous to be standing there to take this photograph. I carefully composed and focused under the dark cloth, after which I made several slow exposures, 1/4 second each, asking Andrew Kosto not to move. Other miners, coming off their shift, emerging from the darkness of the mine on the mantrap, saying “smile” and joking, but Kosto remained still and stoic for the portrait. Several years later, I learned that Kosto was killed when a large piece of slate fell on him while he was investigating an obstruction in the coal loading tipple.
SHELIA PREE BRIGHT

#ATLisReady (from #1960Now series), 2016
JOSHUA DUDLEY GREER

Ponce de Leon Springs, Florida, 2013
There is a corner store near my house where several old-timers spend their days. Gossiping, drinking beer, cashing their social security checks, and getting lunch. One of these fellows, years ago, lost his wife. When she died, he started to wear her clothes and even changed his name. It was his way of processing her death and his own grief. The remarkable thing about it to me was that no one seemed to make any issue of his transformation. He spent his days there as he always had, but now, he wore a dress, a blouse, a wig. After a while, a few months, he started to wear his own clothes again, and then it was over.
I travel alone and am often sexualized by men. This led me to want to sexualize men back through my photographs as a way of reclaiming power. In the series As it was Give(n) to Me, there are many pictures of shirtless men. In exhibitions of this work, I often cluster these photographs together in a grid on the wall to emphasize these encounters. Train tracks run through the center of most Appalachian coal communities. They are a symbol of an extraction industry that has done great harm to the region. My work seeks to highlight extraction in the region through the coal industry and photography. Photographers have been coming to Appalachia to depict (extract) visual representation of poverty for many decades. For me, this photograph depicts this dual extraction.
PAUL KWILECKI
Battles’ Quarters, 1971
DEBORAH LUSTER

The Taxidermist’s Son, 1994
The motivation for creating images, such as this older man sitting in front of a second-hand store, was to give some weight and visual presence to a citizenry that was not being represented. During the 1990s, I created this body of work that told a particular regional story around Athens, GA, of both Black and White communities, where existing past and present White prejudices, (i.e. reverberations from slavery, the civil war, Jim Crow, the civil rights movement, the war on drugs, the creation of the prison industrial complex and on through the continuing disenfranchisement of voters of color) laid bare the resultant damage to both Black and White people and their communities. I wanted to put an actual face on what and who were brought up within an existing system of apartheid that was never questioned enough for real change by a White community; and I wanted to humanize, make visible, the people of both communities.

As to this photograph, as is true for all photographs without text, we cannot ascribe or really know anything of this particular man; we cannot judge; we don’t know his story. He might have been a person disenfranchised by powerful Whites to dilute his voice and vote, along with the Black population, so both entities could be rendered powerless. Or perhaps he is a racist guilty of discrimination, or perhaps he is only a man of an interesting character, unconcerned, who happened to be sitting out in the sun with a big red comb and enjoying his freshly straightened hair. I remember he did not say much. Throughout the entirety of the work, I reserved judgment, not tilting the pictures in a particular political direction. I wanted the visual evidence to speak for itself, without commentary, and the viewer to have their own understandings.
I was young in my field at the time; nevertheless, continuous practice helped me to develop my eye for composition and my ability to see imagery in its best light. As I continued to shoot, I began to have a strong feeling of knowing when I actually made a good shot. It was an amazing stimulating feeling, a surge!!

Mark Gale and his family lived on Glendale Plantation, in a town called Lucy, in St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. While photographing the sugarcane fields and working with Mark, I knew when it happened. I felt that stimulation, that same surge!

Through talking with him, I learned that Mark Gale was 17 years old, the eldest of ten children. He was a sugarcane scrapper, who worked with his mother and father in the sugar cane fields. I met a beautiful black man with the potential to do anything. His location and his blackness in the south may have warranted a manual labor force and not formal education. But what I saw was a youthful black man with potential and a beautiful spirit. A young man whose family, like many in Louisiana, was faced with disparities and little promise.

It was hard times in a poor community. I witnessed Mark’s strength and hard work at such a young age. The plaid shirt he wore as he held an armful of sugarcane. I remember his expression, being proud and stately. The reason why I was compelled to photograph him and capture his iconic spirit. I hoped that life had more in store for him, that this life of labor wouldn’t be his only destiny.
Rhett Anders was recently voted into a Supervisor/Mayoral position and had just finished a conversation with a few people actively involved in community affairs that had to be dealt with. My assignment was to document the community and how they worked together as they merged for the better good. The moment felt as if he were aware of his new responsibilities and was taking a moment to take a breath before jumping into the fire. I was impressed with the people involved with working for the betterment of life within that community. I remember thinking about how lucky they all were.
RUDDY ROYE

*Plantation House, 2016*
My recollection of the origins of this work is related to both aesthetic and technical choices.

I was working in a new environment (gas stations) and with a new format (square). The camera was fitted with a wide lens (38mm on 6x6cm film) and was placed in close proximity to the subject. I had received permission from the owners of many service stations to approach customers with my camera for the purpose of making portraits. I chose stations in the county rather than in town.

That greatly increased the possibilities of whom I might work with (as opposed to knocking on stranger’s doors ostensibly to make a picture on their property and occasionally, when the circumstances allowed, attempting to make a portrait). So, I lurked in the background of the stations and waited. I liked working with people in trucks because they had more interior space and were often roughed up more than cars. I would also use the truck bed as a sort of stage with props. Either environment offered clues to suggest the character of the willing participant.

It was a productive means. The work contributed to my ongoing, varied, depiction of American/Appalachian culture.
I had gone to visit my mother and stepfather for spring break. My father, who sells cars at promotional events in different cities all over the country, happened to be in Birmingham. He only had a couple of hours off from Saturday night to Sunday afternoon. I picked him up in Birmingham, and we all went to dinner at Bahama Bobs in Gulf Shores. I remember enjoying the rare confluence of all three parents in one place and marveling at how far we have come as a family where my dad was welcome and happy to sleep on the couch of his ex-wife and her husband. We woke up early to get him back to the lot by noon and the fog had rolled in. The spring fog is a real compliment to the sherbet-colored palette of Gulf Shores. We had our coffee in the morning, and right before we left, I snapped a couple of photographs.
Gulf
Head, heart
murky as a fogbank
last night's lost sleep
and fistfights with the self
like telephone poles
the masts and rigging of ships
rising up through a mist
and you can only try
to find your way through
dead-reckoning among
the ghosts of cliffs
called Grief, called Regret
lining a hazy shore
swimming sea air
just out somewhere
midway
ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

BUILDER LEVY

(b. 1942) is an American photographer whose 50-plus year career has been centered on creating socially concerned images. Levy spent the majority of his professional life as a New York City public school teacher, using summer breaks to travel to Appalachia to document the lives of coal miners and their families, for which he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. His photographs have been featured in over 300 exhibitions, including 60 solo shows. More than 80 different public and private collections house his work, including the Sir Elton John Photography Collection; the International Center of Photography (New York); The Museum of Fine Arts (Houston); the Brooklyn Museum; and the Chrysler Museum of Art (Norfolk, VA), to name a few. Additionally, Builder has published four monographs.

SHELIA PREE BRIGHT

(b.1967) lives and works in Atlanta, GA. Her work focuses on African American image and Civil Rights. Her recent series, #1960Now, includes portraits of Civil Rights activists and protests around the country was published in 2018. Bright earned her BS from the University of Missouri in 1998, where she became interested in photography during her senior year. She received her MFA from Georgia State University in 2003. Her work has been featured at the Smithsonian African American History and Culture Museum, Washington, DC; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; The Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, GA; and the International Center for Photography.
JOSHUA DUDLEY GREER
(b. 1980) is a photographer from Hazleton, PA, and currently based in Atlanta, GA, where he teaches photography at Georgia State University. Greer’s first monograph, Somewhere Along the Line, was published in 2019 by Kehrer Verlag. The photobook is the culmination of a project spanning six years wherein Greer focused his camera on the massive network of superhighways across the United States, looking for moments of “humor, pathos, and humanity.” Greer has received grants from the Maryland State Arts Council, the Tennessee Arts Commission, and the Aaron Siskind Foundation. His work is held in the permanent collections of the Ogden Museum of Southern Art (New Orleans), the New York Public Library, and the High Museum of Art (Atlanta).

KEVIN KLINE
(b. 1965) is a New Orleans-based photographer. With his series Someday You Will Be a Memory, Kline constructs a personal, subjective survey of the pedestrians of his adopted home. Public collections of his work include the New Orleans Museum of Art; the Ogden Museum of Southern Art (New Orleans), and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation. Kline has exhibited his photographs at Hendrix College (Conway, AR); the Ogden Museum of Southern Art (New Orleans); Gallery Biffi (Piacenza, Italy); the Contemporary Arts Center (New Orleans); the Acadiana Center for the Arts (Lafayette, LA); Rayko Photo Center (San Francisco); and the New Orleans Photo Alliance Gallery, to name a few.
STACY KRANITZ

(b. 1976) is a documentary artist who explores history, representation, and otherness. She is widely known for her rejection of traditional documentary tenets. Instead, opting to pursue a practice she feels is more genuine and honest, which places her in the role of participant-observer. Kranitz’s work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally, including, most recently, shows at Tracey Morgan Gallery (Asheville, NC); Les Rencontres de la Photographie (Arles, France); Gregg Museum of Art & Design (Raleigh, NC); the Sugar Gallery at the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville, AR); and the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art (Charleston, SC). Her images have been published in various forms; she is the author of three monographs and has been featured in numerous anthologies and editorial outlets. In 2020, Kranitz was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship.

PAUL KWILECKI

(1928–2009) was a self-taught documentary photographer. Hailing from Bainbridge, GA, he dedicated himself to photographing his hometown and the surrounding Decatur County. The frames Kwilecki made on his 35mm camera detailed small-town life. Black agricultural workers, working-class folks, cafes, courthouses, grocery stores, cemeteries, and churches—no subject was insignificant to Kwilecki. He published his first book, Understandings: Photographs of Decatur County, Georgia in 1981, followed by Lowly Wise, Book One: Scenes of Religion in and Around Decatur County, Georgia in 1992. One Place: Paul Kwilecki and Four Decades of Photographs from Decatur County, Georgia, edited by Tom Rankin and Iris Tillman Hill, was published posthumously in 2013. His work has been exhibited nationally, and a large archive of his photos and writings are held in the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University.
DEBORAH LUSTER

(b. 1951) is a visual artist from Northwest Arkansas who moved into photography in 1989 as a way of coping with the death of her grandmother and the murder of her mother. She is best known for her long-term documentary projects, which often explore violence and its aftermath. She has authored three books and has been the recipient of many prizes, including a Guggenheim Fellowship; a Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography from the Peabody Museum at Harvard University; the Dorothea Lange—Paul Taylor Prize from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, among others. Luster’s work is included in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts (Houston); the New Orleans Museum of Art; and other notable public and private collections.

CARL MARTIN

(b. 1958) is an artist and designer based in Athens, Georgia. Nuance and gesture are pillars of his photography, which often centers on his surrounding social environments. Studying at the School of Visual Arts in the early ’80s, Martin later fled New York and returned to the South to continue his career. He is the recipient of several awards, including a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1996. Martin’s photographs have been exhibited nationally and are held in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York); the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (Atlanta); Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport; and King and Spalding (Atlanta). In 2018, Fall Line Press published Carl Martin, a book containing over 25 years of his photographs of Athens, Georgia.
CHANDRA MCCORMICK

Keith Calhoun (b. 1955) and Chandra McCormick (b. 1957) are socially engaged artists whose work has focused on their native New Orleans’ vast and complicated social and cultural history. Keith and Chandra collaborate; the duo documents Black and immigrant subjectivity in their home state of Louisiana. Daily life, rituals, religion, laborers, musical traditions—these are all scenes the pair capture in order to preserve and remember their culture and community. Calhoun and McCormick have also documented the lives of the incarcerated men at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, and the displacement and fragmentation of the families and communities in the Lower Ninth Ward by Hurricane Katrina. Their work has been exhibited nationally and internationally—most notably in the 2015 Venice Biennale—and lives in the permanent collections of the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Louisiana State Museum (New Orleans), and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

ELI REED

(b. 1946) is a documentary photographer and the first African American to become a full member of Magnum Photos. His work displays a strong interest in social justice and the effects of war on society. He has produced bodies of work that focused on conditions throughout Central America, the African American experience, and U.S. military involvement abroad, to name a few. He has worked on assignments for publications such as National Geographic, Life, Time, People, Newsweek, The New York Times, and Sports Illustrated. Reed has published two books, and his photographs have been exhibited across the United States. He was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University in 1982 and has won numerous other awards and fellowships, including the W. Eugene Smith Grant in Documentary Photography, the Kodak World Image Award for Fine Art Photography, the World Press Photo award.
MIKE SMITH

(b. 1951) is a documentary photographer and Professor Emeritus of Photography at East Tennessee State University, where he began teaching in 1981. Since then, his work has primarily centered on the culture and landscape of his home of Johnson City and the surrounding areas of rural Appalachia, drawing contrasts between the modern and rural, past and present, traditions and change. Smith’s images have appeared in renowned outlets such as Harper’s, The Washington Post, The New York Times Magazine, and Oxford American. He has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship, the United States Artist Lowe Fellowship, and the Tennessee Governor’s Arts Award. Collections holding Smith’s photographs include the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York); The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); The Museum of Modern Art (New York); the Art Institute of Chicago; the Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland, OH); the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and more.

RADCLIFFE “RUDDY” ROYE

(b. 1969) is a Jamaican-born photographer living in Brooklyn. He has photographed Jamaican dancehall musicians and fans, the Sapeurs of the Congo, the Caribbean Carnival J'Ouvert, and recent political protests in Ferguson, New York, and Dallas. Upon moving to New York in 2001, Roye worked as a freelance photographer for the Associated Press. His photography has appeared in the New York Times, The New Yorker, Vogue, Ebony, Fast Company, BET, and ESPN. His work has been included in exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts; Silver Eye Center for Photography; the Chastain Arts Center; Alice Austen House and Photoville. He has held teaching positions at New York University and the School of Visual Arts and has lectured at Columbia University. Roye is one of the youngest members of the Kamoinge Workshop, the seminal and enduring black photography collective founded in 1963.
BRITTAINY LAUBACK

(b. 1978) is a lens-based artist and educator working in Athens, GA. Her newest project, inspired by a David Foster Wallace essay on cruise life, had her embarking on a cruise ship in the Bahamas to capture its decadence and absurdity. Lauback has shown her images nationally and internationally; more recently, her work was exhibited as part of the Ogden Museum of Southern Art’s New Southern Photography. She currently teaches photography and design at the University of Georgia and is a coordinator for The Humid, a space for photographic workshops, lectures, and events in Athens.

NICK NORWOOD

(b. 1962) grew up in Northeast and North Central Texas, and the landscape and culture of the Red River Valley serve as the basis of many of his poems. His works have appeared in The Paris Review, Southwest Review, Poetry Daily, the Oxford American, U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser’s column American Life in Poetry, and elsewhere. He has published four complete volumes—Eagle & Phenix (2019), Gravel and Hawk (2012, winner of the Hollis Summers Prize), A Palace for the Heart (2004), and The Soft Blare (2003)—and two limited edition books—Text and Wrestle—in collaboration Erika Adams. He has been awarded a Pushcart Prize, an International Merit Award from Atlanta Review, a residency at the Jentel Foundation, twice been a finalist for the Vassar Miller Prize, once each a semifinalist for the Verse Prize and the “Discovery”/The Nation Prize.
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Builder Levy
Andrew Kosto, 1971, Gelatin silver print, 13 ¼" x 10 ¼"

Sheila Pree Bright
#ATLisReady (from #1960Now series), 2016, Archival pigment print, 30" x 30"

Joshua Dudley Greer
Ponce de Leon Springs, Florida, 2013, Archival pigment print, 19" x 24"

Kevin Kline
Man at Corner Store, New Orleans, 2008, Gelatin silver print, 10 ¾" x 10 ¼"

Stacy Kranitz
Logan, West Virginia, 2012, Archival pigment print, 20" x 30"

Paul Kwilecki
Battles’ Quarters, 1971, Gelatin silver print, 10" x 6 ½"

Deborah Luster
The Taxidermist’s Son, 1994, Gelatin silver print, 20” x 20”

Carl Martin
Man with Red Comb, 1994 - 1996, Photographic c-print, 14” x 14”

Chandra McCormick
Marck Gale, Sugar Cane Scraper, Glendale Plantation, Lucy, St John The Baptist Parish, Louisiana, 1986, Archival pigment print, 25” x 19”

Eli Reed
Rhett Anders, Eau Claire Community Council President and real estate agent in front of a historic property, Eau Claire - North Columbia, South Carolina, 1999, Archival pigment print, 12” x 17 15/16”

Ruddy Roye
Plantation House, 2016

Mike Smith
Sullivan County, TN, (boy/ dirt bike), 2007, Archival pigment print, 17 ¾" 17 ¾"

Brittainy Lauback
Gulf shores, 2013, Archival pigment print, 19 ¼” x 20 ¼”

Nick Norwood
Gulf
Mine
In 1970, Neil Young released the song *Southern Man*, his response to the atrocities of southern history and the growing racial tensions of the civil rights movement. This song, which he has played regularly over the last fifty years, served as the initial curatorial inspiration for this exhibition.

*Looking Male* offers multiple ways of visualizing the contemporary American South and the men that live in it. The idea of the southern male one generates is often spurred by historical photographs of the region that trigger stereotypes and limit our ability to see the true nature of the men of the South. Many flawed and widely viewed images have become a truth that people rely upon to support their opinion of the region. It was the curators’ goal to present the southern man in all of their rich complexity. The photographs in this exhibition serve as a foil against the conventional ideas of southern maleness. They were chosen, in part, to move beyond the quintessential, classic male image. Nonetheless, all the images in this exhibition are, by default, incomplete and imperfect.

The combination of photographs presents issues centered on desire, race, religion, class, and gender. The curators repeatedly questioned the selections; the calculus was to create a balance, which would more fairly represent the southern male. While the images were primarily chosen based on the subject matter and the aesthetic qualities of representation, the curators acknowledge that some of the complexity might only reveal itself by releasing information outside the picture plane. For example, does an image of a black man change if it’s revealed that it was created by a white photographer or a black photographer, a man or a woman? If you know that the artist recreated a scene for the sake of the photograph, does that influence one’s interpretation of the resulting image?

The curators of *Looking Male*, Michael McFalls and Rylan Steele, are both artists and educators that grew up in the South and currently call Georgia home. The photographs included in this exhibition were chosen because they allowed the curators to talk about the only perspective they can see the world from: southern, middle class, white, and male. This exhibition offers two varied but similar points of view. It is intended to be evaluated in a nuanced manner without being exclusive to an identity. *Looking Male* invites critique, analysis, investigation, and admiration for what it means to be a man in the South. In the 45 years pictured in this exhibition and the 50 years since Neil Young’s song, some things have changed, and some things have stayed the same. *Looking Male* offers a perspective that illuminates the region as it currently exists and attempts to raise questions about the tradition, history, and progress of the American South.

All the photographs in *Looking Male* are on loan from The Do Good Fund, which is a public collection of contemporary photography focused on the American South. The exhibition consists of work by established and emerging artists, women and men, and artists of color. The 13 selected works, made between 1971 - 2016, were drawn from a broad and diverse collection of over six hundred images. In addition, Nick Norwood was invited to write two poems; one responded to Builder Levy’s photo “Andrew Kosto” and the other to Brittainy Lauback’s "Gulf Shore." These poems were scaled to fill the gallery walls and are published as the opening and closing of this catalog.
The Bartlett Center at Columbus State University is a dynamic, creative learning laboratory that is part gallery, part experimental arts incubator, and part community center. Based on the belief that art can change lives, the center has a two-fold mission: community outreach programs that help facilitate an inclusive environment by encouraging participation from diverse voices, and a national mission to partner with other institutions to provide innovative exhibitions that deepens our understanding of art through publications and public programming. It is a unique cultural institution that is taking a leadership role in the broader University and Columbus arts community and creating a new paradigm for innovation and service. The center houses and displays The Scarborough Collection, 14 monumental paintings by artist and Columbus native Bo Bartlett, and often features rotating exhibitions of national and international acclaim.

The Do Good Fund, Inc. is a Columbus, Georgia-based public charity. Since its founding in 2012, the fund has focused on building a museum-quality collection of photographs taken in the American South since World War II. The collection ranges from works by more than twenty Guggenheim Fellows to images by lesser-known and emerging photographers working in the region.