



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

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PAUL KWILECKI EXHIBITION EXPLORES *WORK, WORSHIP & COMMUNITY*

Bainbridge Photographer Documented Decades of Life in Decatur County

[For Release March 16, 2021 – Albany, GA] — Work, worship and community are important components of life in the South. Photographer Paul Kwilecki framed, captured and preserved those aspects of life in his hometown of Bainbridge, Ga., and Decatur County through black-and-white photography. Twenty-nine of his images are on exhibition at the Albany Museum of Art.

Work, Worship & Community: Photography by Paul Kwilecki opened March 4, in the AMA East Gallery and continues through June 26, 2021. The AMA is open 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 10 am-7 pm on Thursdays. Admission is free.

“The documentary nature of Kwilecki’s work belies deeper feeling, even love the photographer held for his subjects, all of whom lived in his own backyard of Southwest Georgia,” Albany Museum of Art Executive Director Andrew J. Wulf, Ph.D., said. “Kwilecki practiced the opposite of travel photography. He stayed put, for decades, mining visually the everyman and everywoman of Decatur County. He was an anthropologist who studied his home, bringing into high relief the mystery of all folks everywhere.”

Kwilecki (1928-2009) was dedicated to photographing his hometown and surrounding Decatur County. Shooting 35mm film, he captured small-town life with images of Black agricultural workers, working-class individuals, cafés, courthouses, grocery stores, cemeteries and churches.

“*Work, Worship & Community* represents a selection of documentary photographs taken throughout a lifetime in South Georgia,” AMA Guest Curator Didi Dunphy says. “Looking for the core of what it is to be human, through love, toil, hope and despair, cruel poverty to an overpowering vitality, Kwilecki captures the essential nature of ourselves and place. Images of laborers, churchgoers, some enjoying leisure and neighbors, Kwilecki shows us a grave reminder of the socio-political gap in rural and small-town Georgia and those who live and work in the region.”

The exhibition was made possible by The Do Good Fund, a Columbus, Ga.-based public charity with a photography collection that represents “a visual narrative of the ever-changing South,” Dunphy said.

Kwilecki did not pretend to be an impartial photographer who was comprehensively documenting life in his hometown. In the book *One Place: Paul Kwilecki and Four Decades of Photographs from Decatur County, Georgia*, which was published after his death, he said he photographed subjects that to him were “vivid and substantial.” He focused on illustrating the lives of the poorer residents of Bainbridge and Decatur County, with wealthier residents shown primarily as business owners or shoppers. In his photography, he said in *One Place*, “the essential element was feeling.”

Kwilecki’s first book, *Understandings: Photographs of Decatur County, Georgia*, was published 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.

Kwilecki’s work will be at the center of an artist discussion, *Work, Worship & Community: A Panel Discussion on Race and Community*, at 5 pm on Thursday, April 22 in the AMA East Gallery.

The Do Good Fund, founded in 2012, has built a museum-quality collection of photographs taken since World War II in the South. Included in the collection of more than 600 photographs are works by more than 20 Guggenheim Fellows, as well as lesser known and emerging photographers. The organization’s mission is to make its collection broadly accessible through regional museums, nonprofit galleries and nontraditional venues, and to encourage complementary, community-based programming to accompany each exhibition.

“Thank you to The Do Good Fund for this opportunity to share Paul Kwilecki’s work with the Albany community,” Dunphy said.

MANDATORY PHOTO CREDIT

Paul Kwilecki, "Flint River Boat Basin," 1979, gelatin silver print, © The Paul Kwilecki Family. Image courtesy of The Do Good Fund, Inc., 2015-60. This image may not be copied, reproduced or used without written permission of the Paul Kwilecki Family.

CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *Butch Anthony: Art, Nature, and Intertwangleism* is in the Haley Gallery March 4-July 31, 2021.
- *Work, Worship & Community: Paul Kwilecki* is in the East Gallery March 4-June 26, 2021.
- *Educators as Artists: 4th College Faculty Exhibition* is in the McCormack Gallery March 4-June 26, 2021
- *Works by Tom Ferguson* is in the Hodges Gallery through April 30, 2021.
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery.

ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 10 am-7 pm Thursdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, www.albanymuseum.com or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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