

UM
museum





Untitled
(front cover)
1973
Photograph

Untitled
(previous page)
Huntsville, Alabama
c. 1971
Photograph

Untitled
Waterford, MS
1983
Photograph



W

William Eggleston was born July 27, 1939, in Memphis, Tennessee and grew up in Sumner, Mississippi. Eggleston's straightforward depictions of everyday objects and scenes, many of them set in the South, are noted for their rich colors, precise composition, and evocative allure. He began with black-and-white images, but by the mid-1960s opted for the new color technology, which had largely been used in commercial advertising. The innovative 1976 one-man exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Photographs by William Eggleston*, cemented his reputation as a pioneer of color photography. His work was credited with helping establish color photography in the late 20th century as a legitimate artistic medium. Eggleston continues to live and work in Memphis, Tennessee.

The University of Mississippi Museum and Historic Houses maintains a collection of fifty-four photographs by William Eggleston, a combination of black-and-white and color images. William Ferris gifted the spectacular array of Eggleston photographs to the Museum.



He was a great mentor, and I learned as much from him as I did from any teacher at the Academy. We rode around in the late afternoon light in Memphis and its environs, where I observed those things he thought worth photographing (pretty much everything!). It was an education in how to look at the world and take away a little piece of it, and for that I'll always be grateful. I later moved to New York City, where Bill had the first color show at the Museum of Modern Art (*Photographs by William Eggleston*, 1976). Not everybody quite understood the work then, but later they did.

—MAUDE SCHUYLER CLAY

photographer, author, and cousin of William Eggleston



To see an Eggleston photograph is to be forever marked by his eye. He brings us face to face with a time both intensely beautiful and deeply troubling. His unflinching eye peers through a dark, private lens, his finger presses, and the shutter's familiar click locks down another window of memory.

—WILLIAM FERRIS

scholar, friend and donor of Eggleston photographs to the University Museum

Untitled (top left)
Waterford, MS
1983
Photograph

Sharon Stone (top right)
Memphis, TN
1961
Photograph



Untitled
Near Marks, MS
c. 1971
Photograph

Untitled (back cover)
No date
Photograph

Standing before these photos, we are never mere observers. We experience them. We feel them. We close our eyes and still see them. We're forever seeing them. Look at an Eggleston photograph once and you are forever altered. Suddenly, you are in it. It is in you.

—MEGAN ABBOTT

*novelist and guest curator of
The Beautiful Mysterious:
The Extraordinary Gaze of William Eggleston
at the University of Mississippi Museum*

Harry Callahan among others, made color photographs long before Eggleston, but not quite like these. Familiarity and informality are a key to understanding his iconography, as is the often alluded to “snap shot” quality of his work. This illusion of familiarity brings one into the picture plane, as if to say, “I could have made that photograph.” But, of course, you didn’t.

—WILLIAM DUNLAP

artist, writer, arts commentator, and educator



VIEW THE ENTIRE EGGLESTON COLLECTION: MUSEUM.OLEMISS.EDU/EGGLESTON

The University of Mississippi Museum and Historic Houses

P.O. BOX 1848, UNIVERSITY, MS 38677 ■ t. 662.915.7073 ■ MUSEUM.OLEMISS.EDU   