

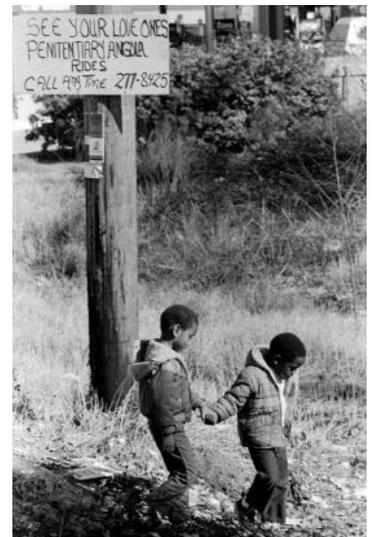
**THE BMA PRESENTS *SLAVERY, THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX:*
*PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEITH CALHOUN AND CHANDRA MCCORMICK***

BALTIMORE, MD (April 16, 2019)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) presents an exhibition of photographs by New Orleans natives Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick. On view June 16–October 27, 2019, *Slavery, the Prison Industrial Complex: Photographs by Keith Calhoun & Chandra McCormick* features the husband-and-wife team’s poignant and celebrated photographs of life and labor practices at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, the largest maximum-security prison in the United States. The exhibition features approximately three dozen mostly black-and-white images and videos that record the exploitation of the men incarcerated at the Angola prison farm while also revealing the nuances of their individual narratives. Included among these works is a remarkable group of portraits, images of living and working conditions in the prison and the annual prison rodeo, emotionally charged photographs of men furloughed to attend family funerals, and videos of exonerated men being released and testifying to the difficulties they faced while incarcerated. The BMA’s presentation will also feature a new video and photographs dedicated to Norris Henderson and Gary Tyler, formerly incarcerated men who have achieved major civil rights victories in the struggle against mass incarceration.

“Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick’s photographs are extraordinary not only for revealing links between slavery’s legacy and the current economic practices at Angola, but also for how they capture the humanity of the men incarcerated there,” said Christopher Bedford, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “Their commitment to the lives of the people they work with at Angola and in their New Orleans community will have an impact for generations to come.”

Since 1980, Calhoun and McCormick have made regular visits to Angola, which was founded on the consolidated land of several cotton and sugarcane plantations and named for the country of origin for many of the slaves who worked the land. Angola is also called “The Farm” because the 18,000-acre campus continues to grow cash crops—as much as four million pounds a year—using inmate labor. (The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits involuntary servitude, does not apply to convicted inmates.) There are currently more than 6,000 inmates at Angola and roughly 75 percent are African American. As first-hand witnesses to exploitative labor practices, Calhoun and McCormick are committed to bringing attention to how incarceration, which has more than quadrupled in the United States since 1980, can fuel and abet capitalism. The problem is complicated further because the economic welfare of local communities largely depends on the penal system for civilian employment.

Largely self-taught, the couple began their artistic careers photographing festivals, second line parades, and neighborhood gatherings in New Orleans. The post-Katrina recovery process after 2005 led the couple to redouble their community engagement efforts. Their intimate understanding of prison culture and the importance of intervention before incarceration has informed their activism not only on behalf of individuals directly involved with correctional facilities, but also in their own New Orleans community, where they teach photography to at-risk youth



and have made their studio a welcoming environment in the neighborhood. The exhibition is organized by the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee, and is curated by Katie Delmez and Susan H. Edwards, PhD. It is organized in Baltimore by Leslie Cozzi, BMA Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings & Photographs.

This exhibition and related programs have been made possible by contributions from Ellen and Ed Bernard and the Open Society Institute-Baltimore in honor of Sue Cohen, a fierce advocate for equity and the arts, and longtime supporter and Board member for both the BMA and OSI-Baltimore.

Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick

Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick were born and raised in the lower ninth ward of New Orleans, Louisiana. As a husband-and-wife team, they have been documenting Louisiana and its people for more than 30 years, including jazz funerals, social and pleasure clubs, benevolent societies, and the Black Mardi Gras Indians. Calhoun and McCormick have also covered religious and spiritual ceremonies throughout their community, as well as river baptisms in rural Louisiana. Among the subjects of their photographic series are dock workers, longshoremen, and freight handlers on the docks of New Orleans; sugar cane field scrappers along the Mississippi River; and cotton gin and sweet potato workers in Lake Providence, Louisiana. Calhoun and McCormick's images have been shown widely at institutions including the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum; the Brooklyn Museum; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Louisiana State Museum; the New Orleans Museum of Art; and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art as part of *Prospect.3: Notes for Now*. They also participated in the 56th Venice Biennale, becoming the first Louisiana artists selected for that prestigious art fair. Calhoun and McCormick's works are in the collections of the New Orleans Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and Louisiana State Museum.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by *Louisiana Medley*, a hardcover book about the couple's work produced by the Frist Art Museum. Published by Lucia | Marquand, the book includes 70 plates; a foreword by Dr. Deborah Willis, chair of the Department of Photography & Imaging at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts; a career overview by Frist Art Museum executive director and photography historian Dr. Susan H. Edwards; and an essay by Dr. Makeda Best, Richard L. Menschel Curator of Photography, Harvard Art Museums, that places the images of *Slavery, the Prison Industrial Complex* in the context of other prison photographs.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000- square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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Images: Chandra McCormick. *Father Forgive Them*. 2013. Courtesy of the artist. © Chandra McCormick
Keith Calhoun. *Our Children Endangered, the New Prey for Prison Beds, New Orleans*. 1982. Courtesy of the artist.
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