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ART GALLERIES

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Photographs of Berenice Abbott's Famous East Coast Road Trip Make a Pit Stop in Miami, Summer 2017

North and South: Berenice Abbott's U.S. Route 1 (June 9–October 8, 2017)
reveals daily life in 1950s America from Key West to northern Maine

MIAMI BEACH (February 7, 2017) — The Wolfsonian—Florida International University is pleased to be the Summer 2017 destination for *North and South: Berenice Abbott's U.S. Route 1*, a selection of images from the artist's June 1954 journey along the American East Coast. Culled from Syracuse University's premier collection of Abbott's work, *North and South* brings together approximately 50 black-and-white photographs from over 2,400 shots captured between Key West, Florida, and Fort Kent, Maine—her largest portfolio devoted to one subject, and a notable departure from earlier subject matter. The mostly unknown series presents a singular visual summary of American life in the 1950s, from scenes of peach picking, dancing, and alligator wrestling to candid portraits of potato and tobacco farmers.

North and South is organized by the Syracuse University Art Collection and will be on view at The Wolfsonian from June 9 through October 8, 2017. It will be the first major photography exhibition displayed at the museum in more than a decade.

"I think almost more than any other work she did, this (Route 1) really got to the heart of what she was interested in illustrating, which was the sense of a changing landscape through photographs that were truly objective in their presentation," said David Prince, associate director & curator of collections at SUArt Galleries, who curated *North and South*. "Construction of the country's

interstate highway system was underway and Abbott wanted to document the historic character of the East Coast while it survived.”

Celebrated for her no-frills approach to photography, Berenice Abbott (1898–1991) built a career as a documentarian, preferring to thoughtfully frame and focus each shot on site over manipulating negatives back in the studio. After honing her craft under the tutelage of Man Ray, Abbott established her name through a few distinct photo series: portraiture of Paris’ cultural avant-garde, the evolving urban landscape of New York City, and scientific photography. Throughout all, she balanced an artful eye with a straightforward, factual approach.

Abbott’s road trip in 1954, armed for the first time with a portable Rolleiflex camera, marked a shift in theme as much as a continuation of style. As in her previous work, the vistas and vignettes of *North and South* are presented without staging or editorializing—faithfully recording the daily life of Americans as the country was changing, without idealization or nostalgia, criticism or commentary. Many of the images capture the working class and reflect the diverse character of regions along the Eastern seaboard.

“*North and South* fits perfectly into the Wolfsonian approach of highlighting the human experience in the modern age,” said assistant curator Whitney Richardson, who is organizing The Wolfsonian’s presentation of the exhibition. “These photographs are incredibly revealing when it comes to the layers of history that exist in a particular place at a particular moment. We’re thrilled to bring Berenice Abbott’s work to a Miami audience, in a city where Route 1 still plays a major role in shaping day-to-day life.”

In tandem with the exhibition, The Wolfsonian will host a suite of dynamic programs including a road trip-themed film and tour series, a family-friendly event, and public and member workshops with contemporary photojournalists and street photographers.

North and South has previously traveled to the High Museum of Art; Hillwood Art Museum; Museum of Art, University of Maine, Orono; Museum of Our National Heritage; and the Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona State College.

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About The Wolfsonian—Florida International University

The Wolfsonian—FIU is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collection comprises approximately 180,000 objects from the 1850s to the 1950s—the height of the Industrial Revolution through the aftermath of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is \$10 for adults; \$5 for seniors, students, and children age 6–12; and free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, and children under six. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 10am–6pm; Friday, 10am–9pm; Sunday, noon–6pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at wolfsonian.org for further information.

The Wolfsonian receives generous and ongoing support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council.

About Florida International University

Florida International University is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as R1: Doctoral Universities - Highest Research Activity and recognized as a Carnegie engaged university. It is a public research university with colleges and schools that offers 196 bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs in fields such as engineering, computer science, international relations, architecture, law and medicine. As one of South Florida's anchor institutions, FIU contributes almost \$9 billion each year to the local economy. FIU is Worlds Ahead in finding solutions to the most challenging problems of our time. FIU emphasizes research as a major component of its mission. FIU has awarded more than 220,000 degrees and enrolls more than 54,000 students in two campuses and three centers including FIU Downtown on Brickell, FIU@I-75, and the Miami Beach Urban Studios. FIU's Medina Aquarius Program houses the Aquarius Reef Base, a unique underwater research facility in the Florida Keys. FIU also supports artistic and cultural engagement through its three museums: Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, The Wolfsonian-FIU, and The Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU. FIU is a member of Conference USA and more than 400 student-athletes participating in 18 sports. For more information about FIU, visit fiu.edu.

About the SUArt Galleries Traveling Exhibition Program

The Syracuse University Art Galleries Traveling Exhibition Program has provided affordable exhibitions to small and medium museums and university art galleries for nearly two decades. The SUArt Galleries staff generates exhibitions from Syracuse University's permanent art collection. The focus of the collection is works of art on paper, demonstrating exceptional strength in pieces from the 20th century. Print shows have examined the work of James McNeill Whistler, Georges Rouault, and the German Expressionist movement. Other exhibitions have studied artist portraits and self-portraits, early 20th century images of New York City subways and skyscrapers and 19th century hand-colored Japanese photographs. More information on the Syracuse University Traveling Exhibition Program can be found at travex.syr.edu.

The SUArt Galleries is the largest exhibition venue at Syracuse University for the visual arts. Located in the Shaffer Art Building, SUArt Galleries was established in 2006 and hosts a variety of temporary and permanent exhibitions throughout the year in its nearly 10,000 square feet of exhibition space. The department's mission is to enhance the cultural environment of the University and the Syracuse area through meaningful educational experiences and encounters with the University's permanent collection and temporary exhibitions.

Image

Photograph, *Row of houses, Georgia*, 1954 (detail). Berenice Abbott. Courtesy of the Syracuse University Art Collection.