

North Carolina Museum of Art Presents Photography Exhibition Featuring Durham Bulls
Exhibition documents routines, craft, and community behind minor league baseball team

Raleigh, N.C.—Beginning February 23, 2014, the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) presents *Bull City Summer*, a photography exhibition chronicling the 2013 season at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park. The project features works by nationally and internationally acclaimed photographers Alec Soth, Hank Willis Thomas, Hiroshi Watanabe, Alex Harris, Frank Hunter, Kate Joyce, Elizabeth Matheson, Leah Sobsey, and Jeff Whetstone, and video artist Ivan Weiss. Beginning with the Bulls' home opener on April 8, 2013, the artists converged on the stadium to document all 72 home games.



Bull City Summer is a collaborative effort. In May CAM Raleigh will open an exhibition of photographs and video work that resulted from the project, and in April American Tobacco Campus's Crowe Lobby Gallery will host new photographs not included in the NCMA or CAM shows. By displaying different parts of the project at different times and in different locations in the Triangle, the collaborators hope to engage the community more broadly.

"The idea of community is very important to us at the North Carolina Museum of Art," says Museum Director Lawrence J. Wheeler. "When I heard about this fascinating project portraying the traditions, community, and art of baseball—all documented in photographs by some of the finest local and international artists—I knew the Museum had to be involved."

Bull City Summer offers a subtle yet powerful group study of the obsessive routines and crafts of baseball, including those seen in the stands, in concessions, and behind the scenes.

Project director Sam Stephenson describes *Bull City Summer* as "a portrait of the art and craft and grit of baseball and the community that revolves around it." Explaining what inspired this project, Stephenson says: "My last project, the Jazz Loft Project, involved documenting a building, too. Rather than the Durham Bulls Athletic Park, it was a legendary jazz haunt in New York City in the late 1950s and 1960s. I was ready to document something here and now, not New York 50 years ago. *Bull City Summer* emerged from that impulse."

Highlights of the exhibition include:

- **Alec Soth's portraits**, such as *Center Field #1* and *Crystal*, reveal the solitary nature of baseball by focusing on the players in the outfield and the fans who choose to sit near them.
- Made in collaboration with a group of photographers and their iPhones, **Hank Willis Thomas's giant group portraits** are titled to reflect his endeavor: *A Futile Attempt to Take a Portrait of Everyone Who Attended the Last Regular Season Game*.
- **Frank Hunter's dramatic skylscapes**, such as *Light in a Summer Night #3*, capture the power of nature and the magic of twilight as it settles over the stadium.
- **Kate Joyce's uncanny grid of 30 prints**, *Impact of the Ball and the Outfield Wall, Part I*, depicts dents and marks left by line drives on the famed "Blue Monster" left field wall at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park.

"Here's an opportunity to 'suspend play' and look at baseball through the lens of art—literally," says George Habel, vice president, Sports Group of Capitol Broadcasting Company. "We're grateful to Sam Stephenson and the NCMA and CAM for this opportunity to both celebrate and contemplate Durham Bulls baseball. We've been playing baseball for 111 years, but this is our first time in a museum gallery!"

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Bull City Summer is produced by Sam Stephenson and his Rock Fish Stew Institute of Literature and Materials, based in Durham; and Taj Forer and Michael Itkoff of Daylight Books, based in Hillsborough. Daylight is publishing the related book *Bull City Summer*, featuring writer Adam Sobsey. More details are available at www.bullcitysummer.org. Catalogues can be purchased at www.daylightbooks.org/store/bull-city-summer.

Bull City Summer

February 23–August 31, 2014

East Building, Level A

Free

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday 10 am–5 pm

Friday 10 am–9 pm

Saturday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm

Closed Monday

About the Exhibition

Lead sponsors of *Bull City Summer* are Triangle Orthopaedic Associates, Capitol Broadcasting Company, and the Durham Bulls Baseball Club. Additional sponsorship provided by Baker Roofing.

The exhibition is organized by the North Carolina Museum of Art in collaboration with *Bull City Summer*. This exhibition is made possible, in part, by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources; the North Carolina Museum of Art Foundation, Inc.; and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment for Educational Exhibitions.

Photo caption:

Alec Soth, *Center Field #2. Durham Bulls Athletic Park*, 2013, archival pigment print, 40 x 50 in., Courtesy of the artist, © 2013 Alec Soth

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About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Pat McCrory, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Susan Kluttz, secretary.