



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**North Carolina Museum of Art Presents *Private Eye: Allen G. Thomas Jr. Photography Collection***  
*Photographs are part of promised gift to the NCMA in honor of Lawrence J. Wheeler*

**Raleigh, N.C.**—Beginning September 13, 2014, the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) presents *Private Eye: Allen G. Thomas Jr. Photography Collection*. The exhibition features a selection of contemporary photographs from a promised gift to the NCMA by North Carolina native Allen G. Thomas Jr. in honor of Lawrence J. Wheeler's 20th anniversary as director of the Museum. The works will officially enter the NCMA's permanent collection pending a vote by the Board of Trustees on September 10, 2014.



"I am honored and grateful to receive such a special gift from Allen G. Thomas Jr., who is one of the most important collectors of contemporary photography in the Southeast—if not nationally," says Wheeler. "This exhibition featuring photographs from his extraordinary collection will offer our visitors the chance to see the work of some of the finest photographers of our time."

Ranging in date from 1993 to 2011, the photographs in the exhibition are by Jeff Bark, Matthew Baum, Jordi Bernadó, Jesse Burke, Anthony Goicolea, Bill Jacobson, Chris Jordan, Sze Tsung Leong, Chris McCaw, Ryan McGinley, Zwelethu Mthethwa, Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison, Jack Pierson, Kerry Skarbakka, Alec Soth, and Shen Wei.

The works on view present a range of photographic techniques and processes, from straightforward photography to highly manipulated, staged, and constructed images. Including expressive portraits, otherworldly landscapes, and abstractions of the natural

world, *Private Eye* provides both an introduction to the diversity of contemporary photography and the point of view of one singular collector.

The exhibition complements 16 photographs previously given to the NCMA by Thomas, including works by Anthony Goicolea, Todd Hido, Bill Jacobson, Chris Jordan, Carrie Levy, Zwelethu Mthethwa, Erwin Olaf, Sarah Pickering, Paul Shambroom, and Joyce Tenneson.

"Allen G. Thomas Jr. has an uncanny knack for discovering emerging photographers before the rest of the art world does," says Linda Dougherty, chief curator and curator of contemporary art. "We're fortunate to be promised this gift of 65 photographs from his collection, which will significantly expand the breadth and scope of the Museum's photography collection. Not only will this gift augment works by photographers currently in our collection, but it will also add works by photographers previously not represented."

The NCMA's first major contemporary photography show, *In Focus* (2005), featured 50 works from Thomas's collection and was a catalyst for expanding the Museum's photography collection from 22 photographs to currently almost 400. The exhibition also prompted an ongoing active photography exhibition program, with galleries dedicated year round to photography exhibitions.

"I purchased my first contemporary photograph nearly 20 years ago and quickly developed a tremendous passion for collecting," says Thomas. "I collect images that speak to me on a personal level, so every work in my collection has a memory and a meaning. I'm thrilled to be able to give these photographs to Dr. Wheeler and to the NCMA and look forward to seeing them on view this September."

***Private Eye: Allen G. Thomas Jr. Photography Collection***

September 13, 2014–March 22, 2015

East Building, Level A, Julian T. Baker Jr. Photography Gallery  
Free

(continued)

### **Related Event**

Gallery talk and tour of exhibition with collector Allen G. Thomas Jr.  
Friday, September 19, 6–7 pm  
North Carolina Gallery, East Building  
Free

### **About the Exhibition**

Organized by the North Carolina Museum of Art. 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. Research for this exhibition was made possible by Ann and Jim Goodnight/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fund for Curatorial and Conservation Research and Travel.

### **Photo caption:**

Kerry Skarbakka, *Croatia*, 2003, chromogenic print, 24 x 20 in., Promised gift of Allen G. Thomas Jr. in honor of Lawrence J. Wheeler, © 2003 Kerry Skarbakka

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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.