



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact • Jill E. Dunne • Director of Marketing and Communications
513-639-2954 • media@cincyart.org
953 Eden Park Drive | Cincinnati, Ohio | 45202
www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org

***Images Available Upon Request**

**Cincinnati Art Museum presents photography from the
Bluegrass State with new exhibition, *Kentucky Renaissance:
The Lexington Camera Club and Its Community, 1954–1974***

CINCINNATI – Cincinnati Art Museum presents the first major museum survey of the Lexington Camera Club's artistic achievements in the new exhibition *Kentucky Renaissance: The Lexington Camera Club and Its Community, 1954–1974*. More than 150 photographs, books, prints and other objects made in and around Lexington, Ky. will be on view from October 8, 2016–January 1, 2017.

The exhibition is part of the 2016 FotoFocus Biennial, a celebration of photography and lens-based art held in more than 50 museums and galleries throughout Cincinnati and the surrounding region.

Kentucky Renaissance focuses on the importance of community, revealing friendships and mentorships among Lexington photographers, artists and writers. The exhibition also underscores the artistic achievement of these often overlooked photographers and highlights the importance of regional photography clubs to the history of photography.

From the 1950s onward, Lexington Camera Club members explored the craft and expressive potential of photography with remarkable results. They captured Kentucky's dramatic natural landscape and experimented with different techniques, such as making multiple exposures and shooting deliberately out-of-focus images.

Ralph Eugene Meatyard is the most esteemed artist affiliated with this group. This exhibition sets his art within an unprecedented examination of his mentors, peers and friends in the Lexington Camera Club during the third quarter of the 20th century. In doing so, the exhibition notes the influence this club had not only on Meatyard, but on developing a modernist sensibility blended with Southern culture.

In addition to Meatyard, the photography of Van Deren Coke, Robert C. May, James Baker Hall and Cranston Ritchie, among others, will be presented. *Kentucky Renaissance* reaches beyond the realm of photography to reveal connections to literature. Writers Guy Davenport, Wendell Berry and Thomas Merton are included or depicted in the show, and the influence of regional publishing enterprises like the Jargon Society and Gnomon Press is also acknowledged.

Kentucky Renaissance is the culmination of years of research by Cincinnati Art Museum Curator of Photography Brian Sholis. "As a fan of Meatyard's art and a longtime reader of Guy Davenport, I was somewhat familiar with Lexington and the camera club," Sholis notes. "As my research progressed I was continually surprised—and cheered—by the sense of community that sustained these artists' remarkable achievements. It is a delight to share with our audiences the fantastic experimental artworks I have found and to remind viewers that artistic genius rarely develops in isolation. As in other walks of life, so too with artists: communities sustain creativity."

cincinnati art museum

Kentucky Renaissance will be accompanied by an in-depth catalog by Sholis, co-published with Yale University Press. It includes a contribution by famed literary essayist and Kentucky native John Jeremiah Sullivan, who comments on the Lexington Camera Club's place in the canon of Kentucky artists and writers.

"The South may always be to some degree a 'Sahara of the Bozart,' as Mencken joked, but for that very reason, perhaps, we imbue our artists with a unique luminosity. We need them. And when a community does manage to form, however loosely, there's a glow," writes Sullivan.

The Cincinnati Art Museum will host a variety of programs to investigate the Lexington Camera Club's influence on modernism in Lexington and Kentucky more broadly. From joining a reading club facilitated in partnership with the Cincinnati Public Library to enjoying a live performance of music written by Appalachian musician John Jacob Niles, the museum will provide outlets for patrons and photography enthusiasts to immerse themselves in the region's exciting cultural output.

The Cincinnati Art Museum's *Kentucky Renaissance* member opening is on Wednesday, October 5, from 5–8 p.m. A FotoFocus-sponsored panel discussion on the importance of artist-led photography communities throughout the United States will be held October 19 at 7 p.m. Find details about tours, events and more at www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org.

This exhibition is generously supported by FotoFocus, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). It will be on display on the left side of the Western & Southern Gallery (G232), adjacent to *Van Gogh: Into the Undergrowth*.

###

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

General admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is always free. The museum is open Tuesday–Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.