



Greenville County **Museum of Art**

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-- Using the 19th-century wet-plate collodion process, Spartanburg native Ben Nixon creates landscape photographs of exceptional beauty. By focusing his lens on unfamiliar terrain, he invites viewers into a mysterious, dreamlike world. Nixon is an expert technician in the collodion process, and when shooting in the field he relies on his car as his darkroom, where he develops the glass-plate negatives on site. Nixon's work is currently featured at the Greenville County Museum of Art in an exhibition titled *Native State*.

Because of its ability to record great detail, the collodion process was popular with photographers from the 1850s to the 1880s. The process has remained the same throughout the years. First, a glass plate is prepared and coated with collodion, a highly flammable solution of pyroxylin in alcohol and ether, which quickly loses sensitivity, requiring that the plate be developed immediately after it is shot. Once inside a traveling darkroom, the plate is dipped in a silver nitrate solution before being placed in a sealed container, which is then inserted into the camera and exposed. The glass plate is then returned to the darkroom and developed, dried and varnished, after which prints can be made from the glass plate negative.

Nixon attended Sierra Nevada College in the Lake Tahoe region and studied photography at Rockport College (now Maine Media College). Following his studies, Nixon relocated to California, where he worked for more than five years assisting photographer Jack Welpott. Nixon has also assisted Arno Rafael Minkkinen and printed for Arthur Tress, William Heick, and Art Rogers.

The series titled *Native State* began the summer of 2010 when Nixon returned home to photograph kudzu forests in South Carolina. The exhibition title reflects that the photographs were not only created in the artist's home state but also that his subject matter—natural landscapes and urban landscapes—is captured as it reverts to its native state. Nixon's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the Bolinas Museum.

Ben Nixon: Native State is on view at the Greenville County Museum of Art through September 7.

The Greenville County Museum of Art is located in the center of downtown Greenville's cultural

campus, Heritage Green, at 420 College Street. The GCMA is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 am until 6 pm and on Sundays from 1 pm until 5 pm. Admission is free.

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