



Greenville County **Museum of Art**

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gcma.org

# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**—Controversial and divisive and yet at times inexplicably unifying, the Confederate flag serves as a powerful subject for South Carolina artist Leo Twiggs. Born in 1934, grew up in St. Stephen, South Carolina, and earned his bachelor of arts from Claflin University, where he studied with Arthur Rose. After graduation, Twiggs served in the Army Signal Corps for two years. He returned to South Carolina to teach high school art in Sumter; during the summers he earned his master of arts from New York University, studying under Hale Woodruff.

Twiggs was hired as the first professor of art at South Carolina State University, where he developed the art department and founded the university museum, eventually becoming the chair of the art department. During his tenure at the university, Twiggs brought in nationally recognized artists such as Jacob Lawrence and Elizabeth Catlett. He was the first African American to receive a doctorate in art education from the University of Georgia. Twiggs has received the South Carolina Governor's Trophy and his work has been exhibited throughout the country, including the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Georgia Museum of Art.

Twiggs began experimenting in the mid-1960s with batik, a method in which fabric is dyed using wax as resist, as an alternative to painting. In his *Last Flag* series Twiggs contrasts the folksy quality of the batik medium with the polarizing imagery of Confederate flags. By using the flag as a motif in his work, Twiggs claims it as part of his history. The artist states, "the Confederate Flag is an icon that Whites in the South love to remember, and most Blacks would like to forget; yet, within the dichotomy of these two views is the passion within us all to remember the past and to hold on to some special moment of triumph." Through the repeated image of a torn and tattered flag, Twiggs addresses subtle issues about the shared Southern history of African-Americans and Caucasians, and the continued complexity of race relations.

On Sunday, November 2 at 2 pm, you can listen to South Carolina treasure Leo Twiggs discuss his exhibition and reflect on how his work, which explores the human condition, is rooted in his experiences growing up in South Carolina. The event is free and open to the public.

*Leo Twiggs: Last Flags* is on view at the Greenville County Museum of Art through November 16. 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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