



Paul Kwilecki: Decatur County

November 16 - December 30, 2023

Decatur County is neither simple nor insignificant. Life there is like life everywhere, and I cannot think of a higher goal than understanding what we can of it. — Paul Kwilecki, from *One Place*

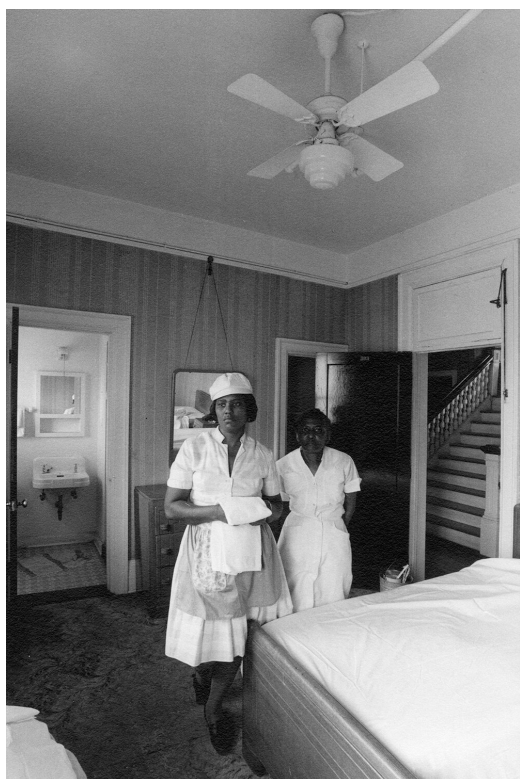
TEN NINETEEN is honored to present an exhibition of photographs by Paul Kwilecki (1928-2009) from the collection of The Do Good Fund. More than forty black-and-white photographs representing Kwilecki's record of his home community will be on view at the Lower Garden District gallery.

Kwilecki was a self-taught photographer who chose to spend his life in Bainbridge, Georgia, the Decatur County town where he was born and raised. His life's work, a remarkable photographic project spanning more than four decades, began in 1960 when he photographed Black agricultural workers preparing covers for a shade-tobacco crop. He conveys a deep empathy for those workers, as well as for rural residents, factory workers, and others who were taken for granted. Despite his central position in the public life of Bainbridge — for years he ran the hardware store his grandfather had established — Kwilecki maintained an outsider's perspective, drawn in particular to subjects whose humanity was exploited or ignored. His photographs are neither political nor polemical. Rather, he sought to create clear and truthful documents, focusing on subjects he found “vivid and substantial.” The resulting images are highly instinctive and personal, embracing complexity, ambiguity, and feeling.

Kwilecki arranged his photographs according to themes, such as workers, religious life, shoppers, and social events. He shot in venues like factories, shanties, and the courthouse. Among the subjects of the photographs on view at Ten Nineteen are farm workers, merchants, prison laborers, county fairs, the bus station, and the Flint River.

Paul Kwilecki's Photographs and Papers Collection is housed at the Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University.

Special thanks to The Do Good Fund for their collaboration.



Pictured above: *Trailways bus station, 1978; Maids, Stephen Decatur Hotel, 1970; and Picking Leaves, 1966.*

Location 1019 Erato Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
Hours Thursday - Saturday, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., and by appointment
Website ten-nineteen.art
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