Southern Routes features work from artists that all connect deeply with the southern United States. Photographers Kelly Berry, Eliot Dudik, Grant Ellis, Kate Medley, Tammy Mercure, Brian Palmer, Tamara Reynolds, Kathleen Robbins, Jerry Siegel, and Aaron Turner take a documentary approach to the everyday lives of American communities, landscapes, and people. Each lens offers a different perspective on the rich cultural, artistic, and culinary manifestos of the South and its inhabitants.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tammy Mercure received her B.A. in Photography from Columbia College Chicago and her MFA in Photography from East Tennessee State University. She is a current resident of New Orleans, and was recently named one of the “100 under 100: The New Superstars of Southern Art.” Her work deals with the cultural and social identity of the South. Her series Cavaliers is an ongoing visual exploration of her surroundings. Since 2008, Mercure has photographed some of the ‘louder’ events in the Southeastern United States, ranging from NASCAR races with upwards of 150,000 attendees to a group of 20 people recreating the stations of the cross. Mercure feels that these events showcase the area’s collective love of history, the land, and their fierce independent spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• What do you think the driver is doing in the cover photo?
• Do you think this is a traditional event? How long do you think its been going on?
• Have you ever been to a race of any kind? Tell us about it. If not, would you want to go to one? Why or why not?

MINI LESSON

• Where do you think the alligator pictured was caught? Near the men’s homes? Far from them? How do you think they caught it?
• Have you ever eaten alligator meat? Would you? Tell us about the most unusual thing you’ve ever eaten.
• Ask your parents if they have any traditional, family-specific recipes. Help them cook and eat this dish.

RESOURCES

*Teachers, be sure to check the appropriateness before showing to students.

• Artist Website
• Interview with Mercure about Wage Gap in Louisiana
• Coondoggin’ with Tammy Mercure

For more information or to book a tour contact Rebecca Davidson, Manager of School and Educator Programs at Rebecca@VirginiaMOCA.org or 757-425-0000 x323.