



Gillian Laub: Southern Rites

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Southern Rites is an original and provocative 12-year visual study of one community's struggle to confront longstanding issues of race and equality.

In May 2009, the *New York Times Magazine* published a photo-essay by Gillian Laub entitled "A Prom Divided," which documented Georgia's Montgomery County High School's racially segregated prom rituals. Laub's photographs ignited a firestorm of national outrage and led the community to finally integrate. One year later, there was newfound hope--a historic campaign to elect the county's first African American sheriff. But the murder of a young black man--portrayed in Laub's earlier prom series--by a white town patriarch reopened old wounds.

Through her intimate portraits and firsthand testimony, Laub reveals in vivid color the horror and humanity of these complex, intertwined narratives. The photographer's inimitable sensibility--it is the essence and emotional truth of the singular person in front of her lens that matters most--ensures that, however elevated the ideas and themes may be, her pictures remain studies of individuals; a chronicle of their courage in the face of injustice, of their suffering and redemption, possessing an unsettling power.

Gillian Laub (born 1975) crafts striking personal portraits, whether she is photographing her own family in Mamaroneck, New York, or victims of violence in the Middle East. In May 2015, the documentary *Southern Rites*--Laub's directorial debut--will premiere on HBO, examining the aftermath of the publication of Laub's photographs of Montgomery County and her own role in the events.

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