

**We are the dreamers, without this,
we are nothing.**

— Brooks Gallo

“When you come to the Delta you’d better not be in any rush, we always do things in our own time.”

This is what I was told on our first visit to what would become our homebase in our Delta explorations in Clarksdale, Mississippi. I agree with the statement, but I would add that the Delta feels more like a trip back in time, almost as if you’ve just entered a movie set. It is a completely unique area of the country and unlike anything I’ve visited before. Its remarkable people, mesmerizing long stretches of cotton fields, towering cypress trees, and lush green fields are just a few examples of the truly beautiful and incredible features and landscapes that Niehues captures flawlessly in all seasons.

Although it feels like it was yesterday, Larry and I had first set out on this journey together at the beginning of 2020. With the Mississippi Delta being the poorest corner in the poorest state of America, it was difficult to know exactly what to expect. Also, it’s no secret that Mississippi has a dark past. But much to my surprise, I can honestly say that I’d never before been to a part of this country where I was treated with such kindness, generosity, and such a warm welcome. Not long after arriving on our first visit, we were invited out to blues shows, we met iconic blues musicians, attended barbecues, went boating on the Mississippi River, witnessed baptisms at the legendary Moon Lake, and so forth. We took up every offer thrown our way to fully dive into why this entirely unique place is the way it is today and to envision what the Mississippi Dream could be. I’d be lying if I said everyone we met graced us with a warm welcome; there were two occasions when we had a gun pulled on us. I believe it was only to scare us away, especially that one time when a man fired several shots in the air to scare us off of his road. Apart from him and a few other examples of the Best of the Bad Apples the Magnolia state has to offer, Mississippi and its inhabitants are very pleasant.

We were confronted by a lot of setbacks and challenges in the making of this book as the Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020. It was particularly hard to navigate considering our constant travels. Throughout these images, you’ll see the use of surgical masks and social distancing that I also believe make this collection truly a one-of-a-kind timepiece.

Mississippi Dream is meant to be a passionate exploration into the culture of the Deep South. It carries notes of both past and present at close range that make this raw and emotional body of work come to life. Niehues has done an extremely great job of capturing our experience of the Mississippi Delta, and inviting viewers along to this area of the South that we now both call “our home away from home.”



I could sum up everything there is to say and how I feel about Mississippi in one word, "Home." I was born in Bentonia and this is where I'll be for the rest of my life. I was only one when my parents purchased the Blue Front Café and they have since passed it on to me. It's the longest standing juke joint there is. It's been like a brother to me my entire life and this year we're celebrating his 75th anniversary. Mississippi is the birthplace of the blues and if it were to die it would be in Mississippi too. The way of life here is simple and real, and there's been plenty of musicians who have tried to recreate that in other places, but there can only be one. I owe everything that I have and what I've done to this place, where the blues has taken me, and I give it my love in return. There's no doubt in my mind that I'm in the right place and that is right here in Mississippi—home.

— Jimmy "Duck" Holmes,
the Last of the Bentonia Blues Men

















