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3-27-2018

## Highly Anticipated Lens Collective Returns to UM

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### Recommended Citation

Steele, Bobby Jr., "Highly Anticipated Lens Collective Returns to UM" (2018). *University of Mississippi News*. 2312.

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## Highly Anticipated Lens Collective Returns to UM

Events include mentoring, book signing and a tour of Delta locales

MARCH 27, 2018 BY BOBBY STEELE JR.

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Students head to and from classes at Farley Hall, home of the Meek School of Journalism and New Media. Photo by Robert Jordan/Ole Miss Communications

OXFORD, Miss. – The **Meek School of Journalism and New Media** at the **University of Mississippi** will host the Lens Collective, an annual multimedia workshop that features collaborations with mentors, students and eight universities, on March 28-31.

This year's focus is on stories about civil rights in the Mississippi Delta.

"The Lens Collective is fun and intense," said Alysia Burton Steele, UM assistant professor of journalism. "We have incredible mentors helping

students and sharing their inspiring work."

Three distinguished guests who mentor students and present their work are Smiley Pool, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist from the Dallas Morning News; Eric Seals, a nine-time regional Emmy Award-winner from the Detroit Free Press; and Josh Bimbaum, award-winning photojournalism professor at Ohio University and author of the coffee table book "Dream Shot: The Journey a Wheelchair Basketball National Championship" (University of Illinois Press, 2017).

Bimbaum will have a book signing as part of the activities. See <https://www.lenscollective.org/> for the schedule.

"We plan to take a bus tour in the Delta, enjoy dinner with people we're documenting and will premiere student work on the last night of the program," Steele said.

Rolando Herts, director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning, has partnered with the Lens Collective to provide a civil rights heritage tour of the area. The tour will include the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden in Ruleville, the historic town of Mound Bayou and a Mississippi Delta soul food experience at The Senator's Place restaurant in Cleveland.

Herts, Lee Aylward and Sheila Winters of The Delta Center organized the tour and connected the Lens Collective with Delta residents whose stories are being documented.

"We are pleased to host for a second year this group of talented students and mentors from across the country," Herts said. "They are documenting and preserving important Mississippi Delta stories."

This is also the second year the Ole Miss journalism school has partnered and will sponsor all other events, which provide an opportunity for participants to build their resumes and portfolios.

"Universities that can provide immersive field experiences to their students like the Lens Collective are taking their education seriously," said Charles Mitchell, the school's assistant dean. "They understand that classroom alone is not sufficient for a media practitioner.

"They find out how much fun it can be and their college work is better because seeing what it's really like being out in the field inspires them."

Events are free and open to the public. Meals are reserved for faculty and students only. For more information about the activities, go to <https://www.lenscollective.org/>.

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