



EMORY

MICHAEL C.
CARLOS
MUSEUM

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Media Advisory: Michael C. Carlos Museum presents *Footwork: Where We Gather* celebrating Atlanta's Sports Culture



Sheila Pree Bright. *Untitled, United Fans' March to the Stadium, Atlanta United vs. Toronto FC, 9/24/2025*. 2025. Archival pigment print. Courtesy the artist. ©Sheila Pree Bright.

[Atlanta, Georgia, February 5, 2026] —The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University presents *Footwork: Where We Gather*, an exhibition that brings together new works by Atlanta lens-based artist Sheila Pree Bright into conversation with two iconic photographs by veteran sports photographer Walter Iooss. Opening to the public on Thursday, February 26 in the John Howett Works on Paper Gallery, the exhibition celebrates Atlanta's sports culture and uplifts the communities that sport engenders.

Drawing from the Museum's permanent collection, photographs by Walter Iooss serve as historical touchstones of sports photography. Included in the exhibition is his iconic image *The Catch*, capturing 49ers' Dwight Clark game-

winning touchdown catch from Joe Montana during the 1982 NFC Championship game. These historic works provide a backdrop for Bright's new photographic series, *Where We Gather*, where she turns her lens toward the fans and the communal spaces that shape Atlanta's sports culture.

Additionally, four large-scale photographs from the series will be installed in the Greek and Roman sculpture gallery, introducing a striking contemporary presence within the classical space.

Pree Bright's photographs capture poignant moments such as Atlanta Falcons Walter Payton Man of the Year, A.J. Terrell Jr. signing autographs for young fans at training camp, Atlanta United Supporters fans carrying the Golden Spike in a pre-match march to the stadium, and fans gathering at the Swag Shop where barbers shape up fans hair as an Atlanta Hawks game begins. Together these images highlight how fandom transforms everyday spaces into sites of ritual, belonging and shared identity.

Sheila Pree Bright shares insight into her new photographic series, *Where We Gather*, stating, "I found that these gatherings reveal how deeply humans desire connection and how sports becomes a ritual in these spaces, where the roar of a crowd transcends geography, class, and culture, uniting strangers in physical spaces where collective emotion becomes its own language...Through my lens, I seek to capture fan culture beyond spectacle or entertainment to see what it reveals about us, our longing for connection, the ways we bond with others, and how we create meaning in a global world yearning for community."

Carlos Museum Works on Paper Curator Andi McKenzie shares her excitement about working with Pree Bright as she develops this important body of work, sharing, "Sheila's images feel like a new kind of sports

photography—one that finds the foundation of professional sports in fan communities. By focusing on the fans, Sheila locates the vibrant clusters who build the sound of a stadium, who gather at tailgates to share food and prognostications, and who return to each other and to a team year after year without fail. Hope thrives in these spaces.” Selected works by Pree Bright from this new series are slated for acquisition by the museum.

This exhibition is part of *Footwork*, a University-wide initiative celebrating Atlanta’s rich sports culture as the city prepares to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Through exhibitions, programs, and community partnerships across Emory’s Atlanta and Oxford Campuses, the initiative explores how sports foster identity, belonging, and connections. To learn more about the Footwork initiative, visit <https://libraries.emory.edu/footwork>.

About Sheila Pree Bright

Sheila Pree Bright is an award-winning lens-based artist best known for her series *#1960Now*, *Suburbia*, *Plastic Bodies*, *Young Americans*, and *Invisible Empire*. Her work is held in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture and the National Gallery of Art. She is a global Brand Ambassador for Leica Camera. For more information, visit www.sheilapreebright.com.

About Walter looss

Walter looss Jr. received his first assignment from *Sports Illustrated* at age 17 and shot his first cover at 20. Over six decades and more than 300 covers later, he has become one of the most influential photographers in American sports. Former *Sports Illustrated* director of photography Steve Fine has called him “an artist who is quite possibly the best sports photographer ever.” From early images of Hank Aaron chasing the home run record to iconic portraits of Michael Jordan, LeBron James, Derek Jeter, and Jordan Spieth, looss has created some of the most enduring photographs in sports history. While his early work captured the drama of competition, his later portraiture reveals the charisma and humanity of the athletes behind the legend. For more information, visit www.walteriooss.com.

About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

Set in the heart of Emory’s Atlanta campus, the Michael C. Carlos Museum is a dynamic, interdisciplinary center for the study of art and culture, with collections from Africa; ancient Egypt; Nubia and the Near East; ancient Greece and Rome; the Indigenous Americas; and South Asia; as well as an intercontinental collection of works on paper. Through our permanent collection galleries, engaging special exhibitions, and innovative programs for audiences of all ages, the Carlos Museum connects the past with the present and the campus with the community.

Curators and faculty develop original exhibitions, engage in interdisciplinary research and teaching, and host touring exhibitions that complement our collections and support the teaching mission of the university. The museum’s conservators collaborate with staff, faculty, and students to conduct research and manage preventive care on the museum’s varied collections. Museum educators reach across the museum, campus, and city to develop opportunities to engage the intellect and the imagination of university students and faculty, preK-12 students and teachers, and the larger Atlanta community.

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