

TRAVELING EXHIBITION

THROUGH DARKNESS TO LIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHS ALONG THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD



Through Darkness to Light: Photographs Along the Underground Railroad— They left during the middle of the night—often carrying little more than the knowledge that moss grows on the north side of trees. An estimated 100,000 slaves between 1830 and the end of the Civil War in 1865 chose to embark on this journey in search of freedom.

Under the cover of darkness, “fugitives” traveled roughly twenty miles each night traversing rugged terrain while enduring all the hardships that Mother Nature could bring to bear. Occasionally, they were guided from one secret, safe location to the next by an ever-changing, clandestine group known as the Underground Railroad. Many consider this to be the first great freedom movement in the Americas and the first time when people of different races and faiths worked together in harmony for freedom and justice.

Photographer Jeanine Michna-Bales has spent more than a decade meticulously researching “fugitive” slaves and the ways they escaped to freedom. While the unnumbered routes of the encompassed countless square miles, the path Michna-Bales documented encompasses roughly 2,000 miles and is based off of actual sites, cities, and places that freedom-seekers passed through during their journey.

Whether they were slaves trying to escape or free Blacks and Whites trying to help, both sides risked everything for the cause of freedom. From the cotton plantations south of Natchitoches, Louisiana, all the way north to the Canadian border, this series of photographs by Michna-Bales helps us imagine what the long road to freedom may have looked like as seen through the eyes of one of those who made this epic journey.

While many books have been written on the subject, there is very little visual documentation of the Underground Railroad because of its secretive nature. Today, as America becomes more and more diverse, Michna-Bales believes that an understanding of the experience—and those who lived through it—is more relevant than ever. The Underground Railroad united people from different races, genders, social levels, religions, and regions in a common and worthwhile cause. It was the first civil rights movement within America. *Through Darkness to Light: Photographs Along the Underground Railroad* encourages visitors to learn more, ask questions, and open a dialogue on the subject, and in the end, provide a better understanding of our origins.

For more information, visit:

www.eusa.org/exhibition/underground-railroad

Left Images: Jeanine Michna-Bales, *Within Reach*, Crossing the St. Clair River to Canada just south of Port Huron, Michigan, 2014; digital C-print, 25 inches x 36 inches; © Jeanine Michna-Bales; Jeanine Michna-Bales, *On the Way to the Hicklin House Station*, San Jacinto, Indiana, 2013; digital C-print, 17 x 24 1/2 inches; © Jeanine Michna-Bales; Jeanine Michna-Bales, *Decision to Leave*, Magnolia Plantation on the Cane River, Louisiana, 2013; digital C-print, 25 x 36 inches; © Jeanine Michna-Bales.

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THE EXHIBITION IN YOUR GALLERY

ExhibitsUSA allows venues to work with our team of interpretive specialists to customize the exhibition based on spatial limitations. If your institution plans to augment or edit the exhibition you are hosting, please notify us of your plans so we can work together on bringing the best exhibition to your venue.

SUPPORT MATERIALS AND SERVICES

When you host an ExhibitsUSA exhibition, you will receive a range of support to present the exhibition to—and engage with—your community, all developed by our team of museum specialists in collaboration with the project's curatorial partners.

THESE INCLUDE:

- A marketing and publicity kit with digital images and cutlines, logos, and a sample press release
- A programming guide with extensive educational resources and program/activity planning ideas for host venue staff and teachers
- Custom-designed interpretive panels, object labels, gallery guides and/or other interactive engagement tools
- A registrar's packet with instructions and documents for condition reporting, and installing and de-installing the exhibition
- Custom-built crates for easy handling and maximum protection, along with instructions for proper packing
- On-call logistical support

Curator: ExhibitsUSA,
Mid-America Arts Alliance

Organized by: ExhibitsUSA,
Mid-America Arts Alliance

Content: approximately 50 framed
color photographs

Duration: 7-week display

Out-of-Region Rental Fee: \$6,600

In-Region Rental Fee: \$3,960
(In-region states: Arkansas,
Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska,
Oklahoma, and Texas)

Shipping expense: Exhibitor
is responsible for payment of
outgoing shipping.

Security: Moderate B

Run. ft.: 275

Number of Crates: 4

Total Weight: 900 pounds

Insurance: The exhibition is fully
insured by ExhibitsUSA at no
additional expense to you, both
while installed and during transit.

DATES AVAILABLE:

*Through Darkness to Light:
Photographs Along the Underground
Railroad* is touring now through
March 2027. The dates below reflect
7-week exhibition periods. Dates are
subject to change; please contact
MoreArt@maaa.org or (816) 800-
0925 for current availability.

April 6–May 25

June 16–August 11

September 1–October 20

November 10–January 7

January 28–March 16

Above: Jeanine Michna-Bales, *Wading Prior to Blackness*,
Grant Parish, Louisiana, 2014; digital C-print, 17 x 24 1/2
inches; © Jeanine Michna-Bales.