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Highly Anticipated Lens Collective Returns to Ole Miss

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OXFORD, Miss. March 23, 2018, Friday – The Meek School of Journalism and New Media (Meek School) will host the **Lens Collective**, an annual multimedia workshop which involves collaborations with mentors, students and eight universities on **March 28 – 31, 2018**. This year’s focuses are stories about Civil Rights in the Mississippi Delta.

“The Lens Collective is fun and intense,” said Alysia Burton Steele, Assistant Professor, of the Meek School. “We have incredible mentors helping students and sharing their inspiring work.” Three distinguished guests who will be mentoring students and presenting their work are **Smiley Pool**, a Pulitzer-Prize winning photojournalist, from the Dallas Morning News and **Eric Seals** a nine-time regional Emmy Award-winner from the Detroit Free Press and **Josh Birnbaum**, award-winning photojournalism professor at Ohio University and author of newly released coffee table book *Dream Shot: The Journey a Wheelchair Basketball National Championship*. He will have a book signing. See website 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,” said Steele. Rolando Herts, Director, of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning (Delta Center) has partnered with the Lens Collective to provide a civil rights heritage tour of the area. The educational tour will include the **Fannie Lou Hamer** Memorial Garden in Ruleville, the historic black town of Mound Bayou, and a Mississippi Delta soul food experience at The Senator’s Place restaurant in Cleveland. Dr. Herts, Lee Aylward, and Sheila Winters of The Delta Center organized the tour and connected 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,” said Herts, “They are documenting and preserving important Mississippi Delta stories.”

This is also the second year the Meek School has partnered and will sponsor all other events. This will be 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, Assistant Dean, of the Meek School. “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 info about presentations: www.lenscollective.org