



«As a result of my early memories, I have a keen awareness of the injustices to which some were subject – I felt them too. Although that was some time ago and I have my career as a photographer in New York City now, the Gulf Coast Region formed my vision and is in my blood forever.» *Paula Barr*

PAULA BARR was reared in Mobile, Alabama, in the American South, where her roots still run deep. Heading North, she completed her art studies at Boston University and established herself as a photographer in New York City while still a young woman. Attracted to architectural, engineering, and industrial subjects, she tackled them ingeniously for such public agencies as the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and the New York Health & Hospitals Corp, as well as corporations such as AT&T, the New York Times, and Microsoft. Devising her own strategies for executing expansive panoramas, she adapted the encompassing format to the diverse specialties of portraiture, cityscape, and industrial documentation. These include a circus ring record of lion tamer Gunther Gebel-Williams at work; traffic-level scenes of a fast-transforming Times Square; and anniversary views of New York's George Washington Bridge and J. F. K. Airport.

In the mid-1990s Barr spent eighteen months commuting to the Gulf Coast for an art commission at the Mobile Infirmary Medical Center, producing a 74-foot long photo mural celebrating the local geography; it is still the largest photograph in the world and the first to be made with archival glass tiles of Barr's own invention. On her return visits, before and after this work, she photographed the region of her youth and its people – most recently in the period following the devastating hurricanes of fall 2005.

Raised in a Jewish household during the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, Barr can identify with the people neglected and displaced in the storms' aftermath. This exhibition contains Gulf Coast photographs from earlier years and "Now" – pre- and post-hurricanes, focusing on the most devastated locations along the coast-hugging US Route 90 highway. Through "Gulf Coast Echo," Barr intends to keep alive the "old news" of the region's unfinished recovery by visually commemorating what was lost and what needs to be regained.

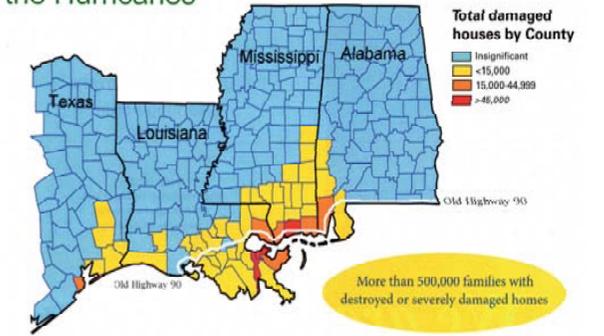
*Barr's work is held by AON Corporation, Bankers Trust, Bear Stearns, Bellevue Hospital Center, Berks-Lehigh Valley College, Brooklyn Museum, Chase Manhattan Bank, Davis Polk & Wardwell, Elf Aquitaine, First Boston, Goldwater Memorial Hospital, International Photography Hall of Fame and Museum, John Samuels Collection, Lever Brothers, Library of Congress, Mobile Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art (New York), Museum of the City of New York, New York Public Library, New York Telephone, Penn State University, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, Smithsonian Institution, the State of Alabama, State University of New York, New York, Statue of Liberty National Monument, United States Department of the Interior, and many private collectors. Paula Barr's website contains more information: [www.paulabarr.com](http://www.paulabarr.com)*

## LOUISIANA DISASTER RECOVERY FOUNDATION

Hope and history provide good metaphors for Paula Barr's work. Hurricane Katrina exposed the human face of poverty, but it also exposed the resilience of a people who refused to be defeated by the impact of high waters and strong winds. We are reminded that out of tragedy and struggle can come great glory, great dignity, great hope, and great victory. When we look back two years, hope at first glance seems inadequate and unrealistic, particularly when we are still surrounded by so many evidences of human failure. But hope is not optimism based on what you see. Hope allows us to see beyond what is and to imagine what can and what ought to be. It is not so much an act of memory as it is an act of imagination and courage. It is in this spirit that these photographs enable us to imagine far more than simply what the eyes at first glimpse reveal.

*Ambassador James A. Joseph, Chair  
Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation*

### Unprecedented damage caused by the Hurricanes



Source: Habitat for Humanity,  
New York Regional Association of Grantmakers Gulf Coast  
Recovery Learning Forum, NYC, 7/12/06



*Chipco, 1994, Blakely Island, Mobile, AL*



*Mardi Gras Warehouse, 1994, Belle Fontaine, AL*

# GULF COAST ECHO

BY PAULA BARR



**BEFORE...**

Dobson's Boarding House, 1979,  
Mobile, AL



**BEFORE...**

Ernest, 1977,  
Greater Gulf State Fair Grounds,  
Mobile, AL



**...AFTER**



Swimming Pool, Private Home, 2007,  
two blocks from coastal highway,  
Pass Christian, MS

**...AFTER**



Local Gas Station, 2007,  
corner of Desire, New Orleans, LA

The artist would like to thank ILFORD Imaging Switzerland,  
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Paula Barr's website contains more information: [www.paulabarr.com](http://www.paulabarr.com).  
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The exhibition has been organized by Julia Van Haften,  
former curator and founder of the photography collection  
at The New York Public Library in New York City.

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