



Juke Joint (Author and Artist Series)

Birney Imes

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In this famed collection of full-color photographs, Birney Imes reveals a previously unexplored and now nearly vanished domain, the black juke joints of the Mississippi Delta. Imes's work transforms these common gathering places in Delta cultural life into something rich and strange.

The evocative Mississippi place names in Imes's photographs are as captivating as the names of the juke joints themselves: the Pink Pony in Darling, the People's Choice Café in Leland, Monkey's Place in Merigold, the Evening Star Lounge in Shaw, the Playboy Club in Louise, Juicy's Place in Marcella, the Social Inn in Gunnison, and A. D.'s Place in Glendora.

To the volume Richard Ford, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Sportswriter* and *Independence Day*, contributes a long, perceptive essay that probes the photographs for their aesthetic value and for what they reveal beyond their obvious documentary qualities.

Juke Joint includes approximately sixty photographs taken between 1983 and 1989 as Imes traveled throughout the Delta. Many of the images are the result of long exposures that show the blur of human movement as a figure lounges at a bar or steps across a room to feed quarters into a juke box. The resulting "ghosts" animate the pictures and give them an otherworldly quality.

Today, many of these places no longer exist. And yet these photographs continue to inspire songs, poetry, movie sets, and the interior designs of countless bars, restaurants, and live music venues striving for authenticity and that inimitable Delta Blues feeling.

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