



# The Nashville FLOOD

Ten Years Later

Conte Community Arts Gallery  
Through January 3, 2021

On Saturday, May 1, and Sunday, May 2, 2010, a record-breaking rainfall of over thirteen inches caused major flooding throughout Middle Tennessee. The Cumberland River crested almost twelve feet above flood stage, and smaller waterways such as Browns Creek, Mill Creek, Richland Creek, Whites Creek, and the Harpeth River also flooded, wreaking havoc across the city. Thousands of homes and businesses, including the Grand Ole Opry, the Opryland Hotel, and the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, were damaged or destroyed. Twenty-six people in the region died—eleven in Nashville. Despite the intensity of this historic event, it received little national media attention, primarily because of other compelling news stories and because—unlike some natural disasters—the recovery process was remarkably organized and smooth.

This exhibition features photographs and excerpts of oral histories from ten different neighborhoods—including Antioch, Belle Meade, Bellevue, Bordeaux, and others, in addition to downtown—to present a broad (albeit still incomplete) picture of both the destruction and the relief efforts. Parts of the story may be unfamiliar to Nashville newcomers, while some residents who were here in 2010 may have been too preoccupied with their own situations to follow what was happening in other areas.

## Frist Art Museum

919 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203

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FRONT: The Cumberland River overflowed its banks in 2010, causing floodwaters to rise around the riverfront area and several blocks of downtown Nashville. May 3, 2010. Photo by Larry McCormack. Courtesy of *The Tennessean*

The items in this exhibition come largely from the Nashville Public Library's extensive flood archive and *The Tennessean* newspaper. On a video monitor, we illustrate the long-term impact of the flood by pairing photographs from 2010 with ones from 2020. In downtown Nashville, the recovery marked the beginning of a rapid construction boom that has transformed the city's skyline. In some areas, though, less progress is evident, signifying inequities in rebuilding. Many people, however, recall the heroic rescue efforts and the spirit of volunteerism from this event, which forever changed Music City.

Organized by the Frist Art Museum in partnership with the Nashville Public Library and *The Tennessean*



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