Reece Museum Announces A Major Exhibition

About The DeVault Tavern

The Reece Museum, a unit of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, on the campus of East Tennessee State University is pleased to announce a fall 2014 exhibition about the DeVault Tavern that will run from September 11 through December 12.

The DeVault Tavern, a U.S. National Register of Historic Places listing, is located approximately five miles west of Jonesborough in the community of Leesburg. Frederick DeVault (spelled Davault at that time) built the two-story brick tavern in 1819-1821. As its name suggests, the house originally served as a way station and inn along the region’s primary stagecoach route, until the new railroad bypassed Leesburg in 1857 in favor of Jonesborough. Even after the house was a “tavern” in name only, it continued to anchor a working farm of 200 acres until the early 1960s.

Brooklyn-based artist Paul Kennedy, who grew up in Jonesborough, began photographing and researching the DeVault Tavern in December 2009, just after its sale, and has continued to make photographs as the new owners began a gradual restoration.

For the exhibition, Kennedy will take on the dual role of artist and guest curator, designing an installation and writing interpretive labels that will evoke the detective-like process of archival research and investigation. Twenty of his large, framed photographs will serve as the exhibition’s “establishing shots,” introducing the house
and landscape as theatrical spaces replete with evidence. Specially selected archival material from the Tavern collection will be on display, along with research material drawn from other sources, such as census forms, photos, transcribed letters and maps. The installation will also include five pieces of museum-quality antique furniture that originally belonged in the Tavern.

A 112-page, softbound, full color publication entitled *The DeVault Tavern* will extend the exhibition with additional photographs and archival material. The publication includes a text by the artist as well as essays by Dr. Tom Lee, Diana C. Stoll, and Amber Clawson, and will be available for purchase in the museum and online. Public programming will be an integral part of the three-month exhibit and will include lectures, panel discussions, and workshops. The publication and public programming are funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and ETSU’s Mary B. Martin School of the Arts.

An opening reception for *The DeVault Tavern* will be held on Thursday, September 11, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. The Reece Museum is free and open to the public. For more information please visit [www.etsu.edu/cass/reece](http://www.etsu.edu/cass/reece) or call (423) 439-4392.