

# Fowler

## MUSEUM AT UCLA

### New Orleans Second Line Parades: Photographs by Pableaux Johnson

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**Los Angeles, CA**—Louisiana native Pableaux Johnson has been photographing Second Lines—or Sunday brass band parades—in New Orleans for more than a decade. This exhibition presents 48 color portraits of participants in jubilant processions organized by African American Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, known as SAPCs, which are a hallmark of the Crescent City.

Driven by upbeat music, the Second Line is a unified whole made up of a first line (SAPC members and the band) and a second line (families, tourists, and neighbors who walk and dance with them). In a broader context, the choreographed dance routines and improvisational steps exemplify a legacy of African-inspired ritual and performance.

Originating in the mid-19th century as benevolent associations dedicated to charitable work within the black community, SAPCs have marched on Sundays and special occasions for generations. Collectively, the clubs manage a parade calendar of roughly 40 Sundays per year, and each member has a task to perform: coordinating city permits and marching routes, fundraising, and honoring deceased community members. Elders teach younger participants the how and why of the tradition: basic choreography, how to pace one's self for up to four hours of dance, where to stop in and pay respects to local businesses, and other facets of second-lining, current and historical.

Unmistakable in custom-tailored suits and gowns, matching hats and shoes, and colorful accessories such as parasols, sashes, and feathered fans, Second Lines weave their way through the city accompanied by local musicians playing trombones, trumpets, tubas, and drums. Mixing together with crowds of all ages, the procession embodies a rich local tradition of music, movement, and the demonstration of cultural pride.



### **About the Artist**

Pableaux Johnson began photographing Social Aid and Pleasure Club Second Lines when he arrived in New Orleans in 2001, but turned to consistently documenting the tradition around 2009. Johnson is also a food and travel writer, technologist, and founder of the Red Beans Roadshow, a traveling pop-up that partners with local chefs across the country to serve traditional New Orleans Monday night suppers of red beans, rice, and cornbread.

“My goal with these photographs is to capture in a single frame what it FEELS like to be in the middle of a Second Line—sandwiched between the horn line and a parked car, riding the rope that defines the club’s sacred dance floor, sneaking in to catch the frenetic buckjumping style that matches New Orleans contemporary brass band music,” Johnson said. “In a city that’s 300 years old, Sunday Second Lines nod to the past but embrace the present—that thin line where tradition lives fully, four hours of unbridled jubilation at a time.”

### **Credit**

*New Orleans Second Line Parades: Photographs by Pableaux Johnson* is organized by the Fowler Museum at UCLA and curated by Patrick A. Polk, Curator of Latin American and Caribbean Popular Arts and Guest Curator Jeri Bernadette Williams.

## **RELATED PROGRAMS**

**Friday January 4, 12pm**

**Culture Fix: Patrick A. Polk and Jeri Bernadette Williams on *New Orleans Second Line Parades***

Exhibition co-curators Polk and Williams lead a walk-through of Pableaux Johnson’s photographs of Second Line parades and discuss the pageantry and public performance the images document. The discussion will also compare Second Lines to other Black Atlantic festival traditions, drawing cultural connections to Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, and East and Central Africa.

### **Saturday January 26, 2pm | Artist Talk: Pableaux Johnson**

Pableaux Johnson walks viewers through his photographs of Second Line parades and offers his recollections of marching alongside the benevolent societies who keep this tradition alive. The New Orleans-based artist is also a food and travel writer and chef, and frequently tours the country with his Red Beans Roadshow, sharing culture and conversation with new friends wherever he goes.

### **Sunday, March 3 | Celebrating Mardi Gras**

#### **1pm: A Concert with the New Orleans Traditional Jazz Band**

In advance of Mardi Gras, the New Orleans Traditional Jazz Band takes the stage for a concert inspired by the exhibition *New Orleans Second Line Parades*. The Los Angeles-based band includes members from New Orleans who will pause throughout their performance to discuss the history of American music since 1803 (the year of the Louisiana Purchase) and leading up to the Swing Era.

#### **2–4pm: Fowler Families: Little Mardi Gras with the New Orleans Traditional Jazz Band**

Follow the band in a lively procession into the Fowler’s Davis Courtyard, where jewelry-making and mask-decorating activities will be available to children of all ages.

### **About the Fowler Museum**

The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores global arts and cultures with an emphasis on works from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the indigenous Americas—past and present. The Fowler enhances understanding of world cultures through dynamic exhibitions, publications, and public programs, informed by interdisciplinary approaches and the perspectives of the cultures represented. The work of international contemporary artists is presented within complex frameworks of politics, culture, and social action.

### **Fowler Museum at UCLA**

308 Charles E Young Dr N | Los Angeles, CA 90024 | [fowler.ucla.edu](http://fowler.ucla.edu)

Admission to the Fowler is free

Hours: Wed 12–8pm and Thu–Sun 12–5pm

Parking available in UCLA Lot 4, 398 Westwood Plaza at Sunset Blvd. (\$12/day)

### **CAPTIONS**

Page 1, left to right:

Anthony “Head Honcho” Sims, *Extraordinary Gentleman*, 2016

Original C.T.C. Steppers SAPC, 2018

Sudan SAPC, 2010

Page 2: *Divine Ladies* SAPC, 2015

All photographs: Pableaux Johnson