

Title: A History of Nexus: How an Artist Co-Op Transformed Atlanta

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Today, Atlanta has an active arts community that widely accepts and promotes photographic work. This was not the case forty years ago. This project is centered on research about Nexus—a key organization in the acceptance and promotion of photographic artwork in Atlanta. The organization was founded as an artist cooperative in 1973 by a group of recent Georgia State University graduates from the photography department. It steadily grew into what is now known as the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center. As an integral part of local culture, the history of this organization is well worth preserving. However, little information about the organization's founding or development exists anywhere in a well-documented or accessible form. Many current art students in Atlanta have no idea of what the generations that came before them did for the city. As a current art student, I hope this project will document and preserve this valuable history that might otherwise be lost.

This project began with a series of interviews conducted with active members and employees from Nexus's history for an oral history class and has continued beyond the classroom into a year-long honors thesis project. The interviews bring up issues of memory and time, as the events in discussion are between ten and forty years in the past. They address the concerns of artists seeking growth, acceptance, and a safe space to create and exhibit—concerns affecting artists in the alternative space movement all across the country at that time. These interviews culminate in a documentary film that focuses on the overall experiences of the narrators more than it provides a cohesive chronology, with the goal of illustrating an amazing local history and the power of a few frustrated students in transforming an entire community.