



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Exhibition Documents Decay of Rural Towns

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – Intrigued by the continuing disappearance of U.S. rural towns, Brazilian-born photographer Alex Leme spent two years documenting Cotton Plant, a town of 650 in rural northeast Arkansas. What was once one of that state's fastest-growing communities is now littered with ghost factories, abandoned schools and crumbling buildings. The few local stores struggle to survive, and much of historic downtown has been demolished. The sense of purpose that once accompanied steady, meaningful work has long since vanished.

*Small Town: Portraits of a Disappearing America*, Leme's account of Cotton Plant, will run through May 2.

In 2010, Leme was awarded En Foco's New Works Fellowship in New York for his ongoing project about disappearing U.S. towns. In 2012, Oxford American magazine named him one of the "100 New Superstars of Southern Art." His work has been exhibited in the United States, Brazil, France, England, China and Malaysia and can be found at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans and the Southeast Museum of Photography in Daytona Beach, Fla. He teaches at the University of Massachusetts and the University of Arkansas and does curatorial work at the University Museum of Contemporary Art at UMass.

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*Alex Leme and Oklahoma Contemporary's Artistic Director and Chief Curator Gretchen Wagner are both available for interview. Images from the exhibition provided on request.*

#### **About Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center**

Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center is a regional 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that encourages artistic expression in all its forms through education and exhibitions. Founded in 1989 by businessman and philanthropist Christian Keese and Kirkpatrick Foundation Director Marilyn Myers, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center offers contemporary arts exhibitions throughout the year, free to the public, as well as youth art camps, adult art classes, workshops and lectures.