

David Julian Leonard is an American photographer and filmmaker who now lives in Arles with his French wife Valentine. While discovering many new inspirations in France, some of his work also remains rooted in his home of Memphis and in the American South where he often returns.

He describes himself first as a “cameraman” after pursuing interests in art photography and documentary filmmaking for over 20 years. His friendship and “studies” with William Eggleston fostered his sense of color while his work in cinematography enhanced his understanding of light.

In the 1990s his earliest experience in film included work as a grip and lighting technician on feature films with a remarkable streak of directors and cinematographers who came to the Memphis area including Francis Coppola, Milos Forman, John Toll and Phillippe Rousselot (Oscar winners all).

Also in the ‘90s, his friend and fellow Memphian William Eggleston offered Leonard strong encouragement and support in his pursuits of photography and documentary filmmaking.

Leonard’s art photography brought him more often to Europe. After a first solo show at The Photographers’ Gallery in London in 1999, other shows followed in Scotland, Portugal, Denmark and France.

Beginning in 2007 Leonard became increasingly busy with work as cinematographer, director and editor of documentaries. Mostly these explored the rich music heritage of the American South from his native Tennessee through Mississippi to New Orleans. These “dream jobs” gave Leonard the chance to help tell stories about some of the greatest legends of soul, blues, rock and country music.

The 2016 publication of Leonard’s monograph *Tender is the Light* by German publisher Kehrer Verlag marks a return to the presentation of his art photography.