

### **ARTS & CULTURE**

# The Southern Agenda: August/September 2017

## Goings-on in the South and beyond

by CJ LOTZ AND JED PORTMAN

### **LITERATURE**

## Mississippi

The Write Stuff

The state that sparked the high-wattage imaginations of Faulkner, Welty, Foote, and Hannah continues to produce top literary talent. On Saturday, August 19, at the Mississippi Book Festival in Jackson, hear from such modern-day Magnolia State writers as Beth Ann Fennelly, Richard Ford, Greg Iles, Michael Farris Smith, and Julia Reed. They'll join more than 150 additional authors for one jam-packed day of book talks, panels, Q&As, and readings. The annual book party, held on the lawn of the state capitol, celebrates the past, present, and future of Mississippi's lofty literary tradition. Topics covered range from Southern gothic to new fiction to everyday entertaining. Thursday night's early-bird kickoff event at Cathead Distillery will celebrate the new Mississippi Encyclopedia, a project that began back in 2003. It's the first encyclopedic treatment—all 1,451 pages of it—given to the state since 1907. Finish up at the post-festival bash: a special live *Thacker Mountain Radio* broadcast on Saturday night. "We invite local blues legends to play," says Holly Lange, the festival's director, "and the party goes all night long." msbookfestival.com