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Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies Works in Progress the Focus of New Discussion Series

Summary: The University of Minnesota, Morris introduces a new series of faculty-led presentations entitled “Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies Works in Progress: A Discussion Series.”

(September 17, 2012)-The University of Minnesota, Morris’s Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies (GWSS) program and the Commission on Women introduce a new series of faculty-led presentations entitled “Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies Works in Progress: A Discussion Series.” Each month, faculty conducting gwss-related scholarship will present their “work in progress.” These informal and interactive discussion presentations will be as varied in subject and style as the scholars themselves. While each work showcased is at a different stage of production, all of the presenters are looking for lively discussion and feedback from the audience. This discussion series is open to the public.

The series was initially conceived by Jess Larson, professor of studio art, Sara Haugen, coordinator of the Commission on Women, Karen Ellis, coordinator of conferences and special events, and Jennifer Rothchild, associate professor of sociology. “Specifically, we were interested in putting together a presentation/discussion series for faculty and staff doing gwss-related work,” says Rothchild. “A former GWSS student organized something similar a few years ago, and that discussion series was quite popular with the campus and wider Morris communities. We wanted to start something like that up again, as well as do a better job showcasing the important GWSS research faculty on this campus do.”

The series begins Tuesday, September 18, at 6 p.m. in Humanities Fine Arts (HFA) 2 with Larson’s “Primer for a Young Feminist: New Adventures in Embroidery.” “My work subverts common objects or beliefs to examine the complex terrain that women must navigate in order to shape an identity within a culture offering mixed directives in that pursuit,” says Larson. “The conceptual goal is to illuminate the lack of positive, if not reasonable, feminist social messages by specifically delving into the dearth of negative ones in order to reclaim or destroy them from within.” The work Larson has previously made with this embroidery process—which involves women’s handcrafts, couture sewing, digitized embroidery, and digital imaging—is expanding her professional recognition in the field of art and fiber-based works. Her images have been featured in magazines and books such as *Textiel Plus*, *Allure Magazine*, and Sarah Rose Etter’s *Tongue Party*. She was also featured in the local Public Broadcasting Service series *Postcards* to discuss her processes. She has applied these skills in projects with artists Sean Miller and Connie Hwang for John Ericson Museum of Art and has had exhibits in Denver, Colorado, Grand Rapids, Michigan—as part of the ArtPrize event—and New York City at the Gene Shapiro Auction House.

According to Rothchild, the series is intended to resemble Thursday Afternoon Faculty Seminars, but in a less formal fashion. “We envision these presentations as casual, with plenty of time for Q&A and group discussion.” Interested audiences can look forward to these upcoming discussion presentations: Pieranna Garavaso’s “Women, Reason and Science” on Friday, October 19, at 12 p.m. in the Moccasin Flower Room, Julia Dabbs’s “No Mere Little Woman: The Feminist Undercurrent of May Alcott Nieriker's Studying Art Abroad and How To Do It Cheaply” on Friday, November 2, at 12 p.m. in HFA 2, and Tisha Turk’s “Talking Back to TV: Vidding as Feminist Remix” on Thursday, November 8, at 7 p.m. in HFA 6.

Spring semester discussions will feature work by Michael Lackey, Bradley Deane, Elaine Nelson, Rothchild, and others. Morris students, faculty, and staff, as well as members of the larger community, are encouraged to attend.

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