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First Gallery exhibit has China focus

Summary: Two artists with separate, but complementary, photography exhibits will open the 2008-2009 exhibition season in the Humanities Fine Arts Gallery.

(August 11, 2008)-Two artists with separate, but complementary, photography exhibits will open the 2008-2009 exhibition season in the Humanities Fine Arts (HFA) Gallery at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Works by Joseph Vitone, "Color Notes on a Wide Field," and Jean Locey, "Investigations by Portraiture: A Collaborative Project" will be on display August 25 through September 26. A closing reception will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24. The exhibits will be based on each artist's experiences, connections and travel within China.

Vitone's photographs of China have a cinematic quality as an unfolding of events that is readable in the choreography of the people in both urban and rural areas. The long frame provides the perfect field for unfolding of interactions between the portrait subjects surrounded by their day-to-day activities. The streets of urban China are dense with life and commerce. The cadence of rural life continues largely unchanged from countryside many generations past. The scenes are presented in such a way as to eschew exoticism, and present an understanding of the places and characters, making his subjects approachable and knowable as citizens of a country. The density of population and long history of rural lifestyle have engendered contentment for the lack of personal space and an acceptance of other people as members of a great extended family. Vitone is a professor of photo communications at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. He will lecture about his body of work preceding the closing reception on Thursday Sept. 24.

During a recent trip to Beijing China, Locey met with a number of faculty and students, informally and professionally, from Tsinghua University's Academy of Art and Design. She connected with an engaging group of women studying studio art and art theory. Over the course of her trip she noticed the profound absence of women professionals in leadership roles, as academics, journal editors, curators and critics. In response to this observation, Locey began a critical investigation by producing portraits of female artists and theorists. As the work was produced Locey communicated with her subjects either in the moment of taking their portrait or later by e-mail, sharing the images and inviting responses. Therefore the portraits became a collaborative project that resulted in an ongoing exchange of image and response. Locey is a professor of art at Cornell University since 1980. Her work is included in the collections of the International Museum of Photography, the Museum of Modern Art, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art and many other institutions.

HFA Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday 1-5 p.m., Saturday. The exhibition is free and open to the public.

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