NEW INITIATIVE BRINGS INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS TO DUKE

DURHAM, N.C. – Collier Schorr, an internationally known photographer and art critic, will lead a seminar Friday, April 9, at Duke University as part of the Center for International Studies’ newest initiative, the “Globalization and the Artists” program.

Schorr, whose photographs often stimulate discussions about the shifting lines of gender, nationality, emotion and ethics, will be speaking at 12:30 p.m., Friday, April 9, at the Center for International Studies, 2122 Campus Drive. The public is invited, but seating is limited.

Schorr came to the attention of the international art world in the late 1980s as a sculptor and conceptual artist. Since then, she has evolved principally as a photographer, exhibiting in many important group exhibitions as well as solo shows in New York and Europe. Schorr is also the American editor of the British art magazine Frieze.

April has been designated “globalization month” at Duke. The reason the center began this latest globalization project is because of the obvious impact world development has had on artists, said Rob Sikorski, executive director for the Center for International Studies. He pointed out that the Nobel Prize committee made the 1980s the first decade of world literature with prize recipients from Nigeria, Egypt, St. Lucia, Mexico, Colombia, South Africa and Japan. Also, the development of new technologies, such as the Internet, has given artists access to transnational audiences.

“The kinds of access artists today have to sources of inspiration – other artists, other locations, other materials – have radically expanded in the last 25 years through changes in transportation and communications,” Sikorski said. “Today, you can have a Pakistani photojournalist covering the genocide in Rwanda and have his work picked up by newspapers in Europe, North America, East Asia, then have his work published and distributed internationally by a publishing firm with offices on all continents.”

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Schorr is among a growing number of younger photographers and critics in the United States who are commanding international attention for their work, Sikorski said.

“Her photographs create layerings of often highly conflictual meanings. She breaks free of rigid binaries such as male/female; Christian/Jew; young/old. Her richly colored photographs produce dimensions of meaning that demand the viewer to rethink how one categorizes the world around.”

The center recently received a $5,000 grant from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation to support the launching of the “Globalization and the Artist” initiative.

“We will hold a series of luncheons, visits by outside artists, discussions with faculty and graduate students as well as the public events,” Sikorski, said. “All this will be part of the new Globalization and the Artists initiative.”

One of the reasons the center decided to focus on globalization and the artists was because the center’s two faculty members – Wendy Ewald and Ariel Dorfman – are artists, Sikorski said.

“But it also seemed to me that we at Duke have not been taking full advantage of the intellectual contribution of artists. Many artists, through what they produce and what they say about their work, are adding important contributions to our theoretical understanding of issues such as identity, diversity and equality. Artists are launching significant challenges to how we articulate questions in ethics, human rights and social welfare. We thought that Duke would gain important new voices by fostering a place for artists to engage intellectually with other artists and with academic scholars.”

Photographer Ewald and playwright Dorfman will be working closely with the center and with other faculty members to develop a range of new projects for the initiative, Sikorski said. Already the center is organizing a Robert Flaherty film seminar, and conferences on “The Artist after the Collapse of Communism: Russia and East/Central Europe,” and “In and Out of Africa.”

“Ariel has his plays produced in Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, North America, Africa and Latin America. His editorials are in newspapers around the world and his books get translated into more than a dozen languages. And he himself writes in two languages. Wendy has worked in India, South Africa, Latin America, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and the United States, sharing the differences and commonalities,” Sikorski said.

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Other events planned this month include:

- A presentation on music theory by Duke musician Jairo Moreno at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, April 12, at the center. An assistant professor in Duke’s music department, Moreno’s recordings include several grammy nominated pieces by the Ray Barretto Orchestra and Hector Mortignon Trio.

- A seminar on photography by Ewald at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, April 19, at the center. Ewald has collaborated in art projects with children, families and teachers around the world for 30 years. A senior research professor in the Center for Documentary Studies and the Center for International Studies, Ewald will use photography to probe questions of identity and cultural differences.

- A discussion of Dorfman’s latest book, *The Nanny and the Iceberg*. Dorfman will discuss the book, at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 21, at the center.

For more information about these events or to make a reservation, contact C.T. Woods-Powell, program coordinator, at (919) 684-5162.

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