TWO FALL EXHIBITS EXPLORE YOUTH CULTURE AND MEDIA INFLUENCES

DURHAM, N.C. – Celebrity, appearances, money, possessions -- and Hollywood’s messages about their importance -- are the backdrop for photographer Lauren Greenfield’s award-winning exploration of youth culture in Los Angeles.

An exhibit of her work, titled, “Fast Forward: Growing Up in the Shadow of Hollywood,” opens Sept. 25 with a public reception at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. The exhibit features 50 color photographs that reflect the far-reaching, and at times disturbing, effects of media influences on youth today.

“Although trends come and go, especially among teenagers, I was especially intrigued by the role of the media as a homogenizing force,” explained Greenfield, who graduated from Harvard University in 1987 and whose photographs have been published in The New York Times Magazine, Time, Life, Harper’s, and many other periodicals.

In “Fast Forward,” she skillfully depicts the surprising similarities between affluent children in Westside private schools and graffiti gangs and party crews in East L.A. Her photographs document with vivid clarity the realities of growing up too fast in a culture that is simultaneously irresistible and demanding, both economically and spiritually.

“Fast Forward” runs through Dec. 4, along with a companion exhibit, “Youth Culture in North Carolina,” which features work by local visual artists examining the media industry’s impact on young people closer to home.

“The work in these two exhibits speaks to the commonalities of youth that cross both racial and cultural lines,” said Susan Page, program coordinator for exhibitions at the center. “It’s clear that the primary difference between the youth of the West Coast and youth of the East Coast is simply geography. The overwhelming concerns for all of them seem to revolve around self-image.”

Juried by Kristine Stiles, an artist and associate professor of art history at Duke, “Youth Culture in North Carolina” reflects the influence of the media’s obsession with alternative lifestyles on the state’s youth. Images selected for the exhibit examine a range of characters from punk rockers and skateboarders to beauty queens and beach bums.

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The public is invited to an opening reception for both exhibits on Saturday, Sept. 25, from 6 to 8 p.m. The festivities will include live music by Rubeo, a local all-girl band, and an information fair featuring representatives from Youth Voice Radio, Lambda Youth, 4-H North Carolina, and other statewide youth organizations.

Greenfield will return to Durham in October to work with the Center’s Literacy Through Photography project in the Durham Public Schools. In addition, she will give a public slide presentation on Tuesday, Oct. 19, at 8 p.m. at the center.

These exhibitions and programs are made possible by support from the Lyndhurst Foundation. This project received support from the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of North Carolina, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The “Fast Forward” exhibit and tour are organized by the International Center for Photography in New York and made possible through the generous support of Banana Republic, with additional support from the E.T. Harmax.

Related events continue next month with a Mini Film and Video Festival Oct. 6-8. On Oct. 6, “Concert of Wills” provides a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the spectacular new Getty Museum in Los Angeles. This film is co-sponsored by the DoubleTake Documentary Film Festival.

On Thursday, Oct. 7, will be the premier of “Best of Flicker. Vol. 2”. Flicker is a bi-monthly, noncompetitive festival of Super 8 and 16 mm films, and “Best of Flicker, Vol. 2” offers selected highlights from the past five years of this favorite local festival.

On Friday, Oct. 8, two films will be shown -- the documentary “Media Youthanasia,” and “March of Time: American Lifestyles, American Youth, 1940-1950.”

Admission to the festival is free. All presentations will take place at 8 p.m. at the Center for Documentary Studies, located at 1317 W. Pettigrew St., off Swift Avenue, between Duke’s East and West campuses. Gallery hours are Monday to Thursday, 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

The center’s exhibitions also are free and open to the public. For more information, call 919-660-3663 or visit the center’s website at <http://cds.aas.duke.edu>.

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