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IWU News Advisory

Sherry Wallace
Illinois Wesleyan University

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April 17, 2002

CONTACT: Sherry Wallace, 309/556-3181

Event: May Term Exhibit featuring artist Paula Henderson's New Works in the Merwin Gallery and artist Jeff Curto's Italian Light: A Decade of Images in the Wakeley Gallery

Date: Friday, April 26 -Tuesday, May 28. (The galleries will be closed May 1-7 and May 27.) On Wednesday, May 15, there will be a gallery talk with the artists from 4-5 p.m. and an opening reception from 5-6 p.m.

Time: Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday: 12-4 p.m.

Tuesday evening: 7-9 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday: 1-4 p.m.

Location: Merwin & Wakeley Galleries, Ames School of Art, 302 E. Graham St.,
Bloomington

Admission: Free, open to the public

Background: On display in the Merwin Gallery will be recent works by Chicago artist Paula Henderson. Henderson's exhibit New Works will include "The Next Migration," series--the demolition of public housing in the city of Chicago and "The Revelation" series.

Most of these works in "The Next Migration" are oil-on-canvas and are 70" x 48". The paints present graphic images of public housing in various states of destruction. The images are bold and colorful, and are filled with the visual pleasures of shape, line and repetition.

Upon closer inspection, you realize that these shapes are actually the "guts" of a high-rise building: wires, steel sub-structure and wall materials hanging like spaghetti. The images shift from the elegance of abstraction to the disturbing world of demolition, which the constructed world we believe to be stable comes apart. According to Henderson, "They are to serve as meditations, not political positions, on the issues critical to the advance of civilization. These crude yet physically striking edifices stand as ruined monuments to failed social policy."

Also on display will be a few earlier paintings from "The Revelation" series in which reflected images of nature are presented from an unorthodox perspective. These paints weave together the visual phenomena of camouflage and pattern suggesting the interrelationship of symmetry and chaos in both nature and systems of social order.

On display in the Wakeley Gallery will be photographs by Jeff Curto, who earned a bachelor of fine arts at Illinois Wesleyan in 1981. For the last decade, Curto's primary photographic subject has been Italy and this exhibit will present a slice from this extensive body of work.

On his first visit to Italy in 1989, Curto said that he simply photographed what he saw around him. His original interest was "the country's landscape and architectural qualities...not the large expansive view [but rather] selected fragments of the Italian

environment, seen in quiet, intimate glimpses...luminously peaceful courtyards, sunlight on ageless monuments and the warmth radiating off grapes ripening on the vine are all given equal importance as subject matter."

Over the ensuing decade, Curto began to turn his focus towards buildings and other man-made structures along with traditional landscapes that had originally captured his interest. Describing this shift, Curto says, "I discovered my interest [being drawn] more and more to the Italian obsession with the intersection of land and structure. I began to see that structures were a part of the land, just as much as the land was part of the structure.

Over the past year, Curto has also been exploring new photographic processes that have expanded the possibilities for printing high quality black and white photographs. He explains that "by scanning my original black and white film negatives and using the computer as my darkroom, I can create images that are not only more physically beautiful than traditional silver-based prints, but also are closer to my original vision for the photographs. "It's an exciting time in photography's history, as new tools are making possible new and exciting display possibilities."