Student-Curated Photography Show Opens Nov. 5 at FJJMA

NORMAN, OKLA. – What makes two completely different photographs similar? It’s up to the viewer to find out in a new student-curated exhibition at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. *Stare Stare Stereo* opens with a free, public reception at 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 5.

A guest lecture at 6 p.m. by student curators Lauren Barnes, Sherwin Tibayan and Ken Sims will accompany the exhibition’s opening reception. Association members and the public are invited to the reception, which will feature live music by local experimental guitarist John Calvin.

“By placing two images together, an immediate dichotomy is created,” said Barnes, a photography senior from Duncan, Okla. “A conversation of comparison and contrast is fostered and an emphasis on looking and connoisseurship is elevated. This is the core objective of the exhibition.”

Ghislain d’Humières, director of the FJJMA at the University of Oklahoma, said the exhibition is unique because of its immediate connection to students.
“Stare Stare Stereo is one of the first exhibitions ever curated exclusively by students,” he said. “Because we are a university museum, OU students are our first audience. When they pass the threshold of visitors and actually get involved in selecting the works, designing an exhibition and presenting artwork in a new way, they connect in a much deeper way both with the art and with their visitors. Only in a university setting is this sort of connection possible."

The exhibition positions pairs of images from the museum’s permanent collection for the viewer to first appreciate and analyze individually, then consider together. Visitors are invited to look and analyze the complex construction or design of a photograph.

“With no ultimate right or wrong answers, each pairing remains open to analysis and encourages a different interpretation after each viewing,” said Tibayan, a second-year graduate student in photography from Norman, Okla.

The student curators hope that visitors will see the pairs and make their own connections.

“What begins as a formal and contextual comparison between two images quickly develops into a photographic journey full of random coincidences and ironic moments,” said Sims, an art history graduate student from Oklahoma City, currently living in New York.

The exhibition begins with two stereographs. A stereograph is composed of two slightly different images paired to create the illusion of three dimensions. The stereographs parallel the standard art historical technique developed by Heinrich Wölfflin in the late 19th century. Wölfflin encouraged a critical comparison between images by putting two lantern slide projectors side by side. Wölfflin’s pairs created a visual conversation. Like the stereographs, the images in the rest of the gallery are paired together in order to create a visual dialogue and provide a useful metaphor for engaging the exhibit.

For example, a Jack Welpott photograph of a delivery truck with a landscape painted on the side accompanies a photograph by Frances Merritt Thompson of a man whose mirror reflection reveals a shirt depicting the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

The title of the exhibition, Stare Stare Stereo, in conjunction with the stereographic metaphor, becomes a possible strategy for investigating each pairing.

“Look at one; look at the other; and consider them together,” Barnes said. “In this way, the pairings play with both the eyes and the mind by mixing formal characteristics with conceptual intentions.”

The exhibition remains on display at the FJJMA through May 15, 2011, and is
part of a greater semester of architecture exhibitions and programming at the museum. *Bruce Goff: A Creative Mind*, a new exhibition celebrating the art and achievements of the famous architect, went on display Oct. 9 at the museum and remains on display through Jan. 2, 2011.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is located in the OU Arts District on the corner of Elm Avenue and Boyd Street, at 555 Elm Ave., on the OU Norman campus. The museum’s website is www.ou.edu/fjjma. Admission to the museum is free to all OU students with a current student ID and all museum association members, $5 for adults, $4 for seniors, $3 for children 6 to 17 years of age, $2 for OU faculty/staff, and free for children 5 and under. Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938.

Construction on a new wing is under way, but the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is open and fully functional with exhibitions and programming throughout the entire construction process.

###

**PHOTO CUTLINE**

Visitors are encouraged to actively compare and contrast images in *Stare Stare Stereo*, a new exhibition opening Nov. 5 at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art in Norman. The exhibition is one of the first to be curated by University of Oklahoma students. Pairs of photographs, such as this 1979 work by Jack Welpott, left, and this 1983 work by Frances Merritt Thompson, right, will challenge viewers to make their own connections.

(left)
Jack Welpott (U.S., b. 1923)
*Untitled* (from *New California Views* portfolio, published by Landweber Press, 1979), 1979
Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 in.
Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman; Museum purchase, 1979

(right)
Frances Merritt Thompson (U.S., b. 1944)
*Figure in the Landscape: Hall of Learning*, 1983
Ektacolor, 15 9/16 x 15 9/16 in.
Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman; Fred Jones Memorial Fund Purchase, 1984