

CIVILIAN

ART PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

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Civilian Art Projects partners with the Corcoran College of Art + Design's Print Department to present ***You Won't Believe Your Eyes: The 23rd Annual Printmaking Portfolio***

February 15 – March 1, 2008

OPENING RECEPTION:

Friday, February 15, 2008, 7-9 pm

READING from the "You Won't Believe Your Eyes" chap book:

Thursday, February 28, 2008, 7:30 pm

Civilian Art Projects is proud to partner with the Corcoran College of Art + Design's Printmaking Department to present the 23rd annual portfolio of prints made by faculty and students.

You Won't Believe Your Eyes features lithographs, etchings, screen-prints, letterpress, papermaking, relief and digital prints by: **Aimee Anthony, Meaghan Busch, Patricia Correa, Dane Austin Criner, Tracey Cullen, Georgia Deal, Bridget Dwyer, Elizabeth Grusin-Howe, Melissa P. Hackmann, Bethany Hansen, Carolyn Hartmann, Hedieh Ilchi, Ema Ishii, Carolee Jakes, Elizabeth Klimek, Eric Klug, Andrew, Kozlowski, Pepa Leon*, Kate Libcke, Kerry McAleer-Keeler, Pierrette Montone, Manuel Navarrete, William A. Newman*, Dennis O'Neil with Alexander Djikia, Dan Payn, Tracy Pilzer, Lynn Sures, Paula Wachsstock, Ann-Cathrine Wasmuth, Randolph Williams, and Amy Zaiss.** Participants have been involved in every aspect of producing the exhibition and the portfolio including design, printing and installation.

Past themes have commonly reflected current events such as the portfolio *Contents Under Pressure* which followed the Mapplethorpe controversy at the Corcoran in 1989. The 1999 end-of-the-century portfolio was named *Damnation*, and after September 11, 2001 the portfolio's theme was *Fear, Fate & Faith*. The post September 11th portfolio is in the collection of the Library of Congress.

This year's theme—*You Won't Believe Your Eyes*—speaks to the increasing difficulty of trusting what we see. From our current condition of media saturation and manipulation, *seeing is believing* is no longer a true statement. "We're examining reality while at the same time, retreating from it," explains participating artist Tracy Pilzer.

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Works that retreat from an examination of the real world depart completely from the literal, playing with colorful, fantasy based imagery, text and other materials. Inspired by a three-ring circus and the ringleader's exclamation "step right up, you won't believe your eyes," some artists used this opportunity to explore dada collage and surrealistic themes while others dove into fantasy and abstraction. As a group, and as singular works, the portfolio stands as an example of innovative technique matched with creative vision. All works will be on exhibit and the portfolio is available for review and purchase.

* Bill Newman is represented by Adamson Gallery. Pepa Leon is represented by REYES+DAVIS.

In the Project Space:



Evie Lovett

Eyes of Rwanda: Portraits from the Hospital in Rwinkwavu

Civilian proudly presents for its debut in Washington, DC, *Evie Lovett's photographic series Eyes of Rwanda: Portraits from the Hospital in Rwinkwavu.*

In 2005, the Boston-based organization Partners in Health was invited by the government of Rwanda and given funding by the Clinton Foundation's HIV/AIDS Initiative to bring their model for AIDS treatment to rural Rwanda. The government selected this region, described by one Rwandan government minister as one of the most destitute areas in Rwanda, for this model clinic. They rebuilt the hospital, left untouched since the 1994 genocide. In November 2006, Evie Lovett was invited to visit the hospital. She was the first professional photographer permitted to photograph there.

Not your typical photojournalistic images, *Eyes of Rwanda* is the personal story of life and survival in a hospital in a society that has recently experienced the worst of humanity. The photos depict everyday medical occurrences and recovery mixed with the signs of a society in need of resources as it continues to move beyond the past. "Clean white sheets. Women laughing over dishes in the kitchen. Hope, dignity, the possibility of survival—all this in a place which is the most densely populated country in Africa, one of the poorest, where average life expectancy is 38 years, a place which can never run away from the horror of its recent history," writes Lovett.

Through powerful portraiture and exquisitely detailed landscapes, images intermingle despair with the seeds of hope and the rebuilding of social fabric from ruin. Lovett captures a small and quiet part of the aftermath, quietly unfolding images of the sick, wounded, and healing. As a wound leaves a scar, the series prompts questions about a nation's recovery from genocide as it navigates poverty, AIDS, and remembrance. Somewhere in the imagery lies a reminder of the tragedy mixed with the promise of moving past it. According to Lovett, "You start with one person, one problem, and go from there. Each person is deserving of basic human rights."

Civilian Art Projects is committed to strengthening community and culture through the voice and vision of the artist, in a commercial gallery setting. Civilian produces and supports artist directed projects through exhibitions, books and publications, video and film, one-night events and happenings, and larger-scale projects with an international reach. The gallery is located in the Penn Quarter neighborhood of Washington, DC near many major museums, galleries, and national treasures.

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