

CHAZEN MUSEUM OF ART



Chazen Museum of Art

University of Wisconsin–Madison
800 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53706

PRESS RELEASE For Immediate Release

Contact: Christine Javid, Editor
Tel: 608.263.2068
E-mail: cjavid@chazen.wisc.edu
Web site: chazen.wisc.edu

High resolution images available by request. Contact Christine Javid

Landscape Photographer Gregory Conniff Featured at the Chazen Museum of Art

The Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin–Madison, will present an exhibition of large scale black and white pastoral images by photographer Gregory Conniff from September 2 through November 5, 2006. *Wild Edges: Photographic Ink Prints by Gregory Conniff* will be the first solo presentation of the artist's work at the Chazen and an illustrated catalogue will accompany it.

A resident of Wisconsin for more than thirty years, Conniff has focused much of his artistic energy on the rural Midwest, exploring the interdependent relationship between land and people. For the past fifteen years, Conniff has also been making pictures of rural Mississippi, again focusing on elements of the landscape that resonate with a universal sense of aesthetic familiarity. As he explains, "I am interested in work that defines and protects the vanishing, commonplace beauties that let us know we're home."

Wild Edges: Photographic Ink Prints by Gregory Conniff is an exhibition about beauty and its necessary place in daily human life. Most of the pictures in the show were made specifically for the exhibition. All are printed in a rich four-black ink process that evokes the sensuality of nineteenth century photographic materials. In Conniff's affectionate and intelligent work, there is a visible connection to the history of landscape art, reaching back as far as Claude Lorrain and seventeenth century Dutch drawing. Conniff is also a leading practitioner of a new pastoralism that is casting a contemporary eye on the current state of America's open land. Postmodern in the best sense, Conniff's pictures address the timeless human need to see beauty in the world that shapes our lives.

Conniff has received numerous fellowships, including one from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and two from the National Endowment for the Arts. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Center for Creative Photography in Arizona, among others.

Conniff received a B.A. from Columbia University in 1966 and his LL.B. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1969. In 1978, having had a darkroom since he was thirteen, Conniff

turned to making photographs full time. Conniff has been featured in numerous publications, both as artist and essayist, and has served as a lecturer and consultant on art and law. Conniff's work was the subject of a recent exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Museum, which featured his large-scale digitally printed landscape photographs alongside prints of natural imagery by New York artist Judy Pfaff. A web tour of this exhibition can be viewed online at <http://webpages.charter.net/gconniff/>.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition with an essay by Conniff offering an argument for the evolutionary necessity for beauty in the lives of individuals and society. The catalogue also includes an interview with the artist conducted by Russell Panczenko, director of the Chazen Museum of Art, exploring how and why Conniff makes the pictures he makes, and a timeline of Conniff's professional and personal life. The catalogue will be available for sale in the Chazen Museum Shop in late summer.

Reception

A free public reception will be held on **Friday, September 8** from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Educational Programs

Gregory Conniff will give a lecture on the exhibition at 5:30 p.m. **September 8** in Room L140.

On **Thursday, September 28** at 5:30 p.m. in Room L140, Linda Briscoe Myers, assistant curator of photography, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, will give a talk entitled "The Reconsidered Eye: Ramifications of the Digital Revolution." This year, 2006, marks an unparalleled year in the history of photography. It is simultaneously the 180th anniversary of the creation of the world's first photograph by Nicéphore Niépce in 1826, and the year that may be remembered as the tipping point when digital technology demonstrated its dominance over analog processes. In the commercial sphere, the writing is on the wall: the industry is turning its back on the darkroom. The speaker will examine what effects this revolution has had and may have on our arts and culture. Gallery hours will be extended until 5:30 p.m. before this lecture.

Funding

Generous funding for *Wild Edges: Photographic Ink Prints* by Gregory Conniff has been provided by Diane Seder and Bruce Rosen, the Brittingham Fund, Hilldale Fund, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission with additional funds from Endres Mfg. Company Foundation and Overture Foundation, Madison Arts Commission with funds from the Wisconsin Arts Board, Kohler Foundation, Inc., and Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

###