

Henry William Sharadin Distinguished Lecture Series Presents

William Christenberry

Wednesday, October 8, 2003, 7:00 p.m.
Alumni Auditorium, Student Union Building
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania

This event, sponsored by the College of Visual and Performing Arts, is free and open to the public.



William Christenberry is widely known and respected for his work based on the cultural and geographic realities of the towns in and around Hale County, Alabama. His paintings, drawings, photographs, and objects about the area resonate with melancholy, sympathy, and a restrained passion. Unfortunately, the area's economic and social conditions provide a fertile ground for the Ku Klux Klan - but rather than ignoring this aspect of his cherished birthplace, Christenberry has actively explored the hate group in a variety of works since the early 1960s. He says of the beginning of the KKK pieces:

In 1961, before I left Tuscaloosa for New York, I read in the Tuscaloosa News that there was going to be a Klan Rally in the Tuscaloosa County Court House. So a friend and I went down - I'd always been curious, I'd never seen a Klansmen and I'd hear about secret Klan meetings. I got to the lobby and there was no evidence of the Klan, then I got up to the third level and I looked to my left and there was a Klansman in full robe and hood. He was the only one there and was sort of standing at attention. When I approached him, he didn't move his head, he just moved his eyes, and it scared me to death. To this day I can still see that image. That encounter triggered so much work, beginning with drawings in my sketchbook and some expressionistic paintings. Overtime the work became a tableau, an environment of close to 400 objects, Klan dolls, and over 100 drawings.

(From an October 1, 2002 conversation between the artist and KU's Gallery Director Dan Talley, at Christenberry's Washington, D.C. studio)

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William Christenberry's recent solo exhibitions include:

2002, *Disappearing Places*

Die Photographische Sammlung, August Sander Archiv, SK Stiftung Kultur, Cologne, Germany; also Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium (2001).

2001, *William Christenberry: Sculpture, Photographs, and Drawings*

Pace MacGill Gallery, New York, NY.

2001, *William Christenberry*

Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

2001, *Changing Landscape, The Source Revisited*

The Kreeger Museum, Washington, D.C.

2001, *William Christenberry: Architecture/Archetype*

University of Cincinnati, DAAP Galleries, Cincinnati, OH

Recent group exhibitions include:

2002, *In Response to Place: Photographs from the Nature Conservancy's Last Great Places*

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

2001, *Overnight to Many Cities: Tourism and Travel at Home and Away*

The Photographers' Gallery, London, England.

2000, *Open Ends/MoMA*

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Christenberry's work is in numerous collections including:

Akron Art Museum, Ohio; Art Institute of Chicago; The Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey; The Baltimore Museum of Art; Clarence Kennedy Gallery, Polaroid Collection, Cambridge; The Cleveland Museum of Art; The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia; International Center for Photography, New York; Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut

For more information on Christenberry see:

Lange, Susanne and Allen Tullos, Claudia Schubert. *William Christenberry: Disappearing Places*

Richter Verlag, 2002.

Kalinovska, Milena. *William Christenberry: Changing Landscape — The Source Revisited*

The Kreeger museum, Washington, D.C. 2001.

Wilner Stack, Trudy. *Reconstruction, The Art of William Christenberry*

Center for Creative Photography and University Press of Mississippi: Tucson, Arizona, and Jackson, Mississippi, 1996.