

STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Stockton's Art Gallery to Celebrate Black History Month

Civil War Photography Exhibition Recognizes African American Soldiers

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, December 02, 2009

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Galloway Township, NJ- To celebrate Black History Month, the Visual Arts faculty and the School of Arts and Humanities at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey will sponsor a photography exhibition and artist lecture to commemorate the contributions of African American soldiers during the Civil War. The exhibition and lecture will feature photographer William Earl Williams.

The photography exhibition "Unsung Heroes: African American Soldiers in the Civil War" will run from **January 19, 2010 through February 19, 2010** in the Stockton College Art Gallery in H113 on the Galloway Township campus. Artist William E. Williams will present his slide lecture "The African American Soldiers and the Civil War Experience: Photographs Celebrating Unsung Heroes and Places" on **Wednesday, February 3, 2010** from **2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.** in AS102 lecture hall. Following the lecture, a special meet the artist reception will be held in the Art Gallery from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Over 60 silver gelatin photographs, taken by William E. Williams, with accompanying extended gallery notes will be on display at Stockton's Art Gallery for a month. The images will showcase prominent sites where African American troops contributed to the final Union victory.

Laura Guth, Assistant Director of Light Work, a non-profit, artist-run photography organization in Syracuse, New York said, "Just as monuments symbolize an imperative to remember, Williams' photographs serve to restore forgotten or unmaintained sites to our national memory."

In 1986, William E. Williams began visiting Civil War memorial sites as research for one of his projects. Unexpectedly, Williams discovered a serious lack of coverage recognizing the involvement of over 180,000 African American soldiers during the Civil War. One project quickly led to another. After his extensive research, Williams was driven to document a pictorial history of the sites where the soldiers had been during the course of the war.

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Art Gallery Celebrates Black History Month /page 2

Williams said, "Too often the historical and artistic legacy of black accomplishments is ignored. As an artist the memory of these soldiers has inspired my artistic imagination. The ground they fought on is sacred and an inspiration for all Americans. These sites dispel the myth that blacks were given their citizenship and rights after the Civil War without having fought for and earned them."

William E. Williams is a professor of fine arts and curator of photography at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. Williams received his MFA in photography from Yale University School of Art. Williams' prestigious accomplishments include the following: awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship for 2003-2004; participant in the Light Work Artist-in-Residence program in 2003; served on the national board of the Society for Photographic Education from 1997-2003 as a member of the executive committee; a 1997 Pew Fellow in the Arts; and he has received numerous artist fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts. His work has been exhibited at the Smithsonian, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and Smith College.

Funding for this program has been provided in part by the NJ State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and through the local arts grant program administered by the Atlantic County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs. The Stockton Art Gallery is also a member of the South Jersey Cultural Alliance.

For more information, please visit the Stockton Art Gallery Web site www.stockton.edu/artgallery.

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Title: Jamestown Island, Virginia, 1996

Silver gelatin print by William E. Williams

"This is near the place where the first African indentured laborers landed in the English North American Colonies in 1619. Later this site became a Civil War fort built by enslaved Africans for the defense of the Confederate states."