



The College of New Jersey

The College Art Gallery

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For Immediate Release

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The College Art Gallery presents “Parable of the Garden” focusing on cultural legacy of former Persia

EWING, NJ ... The College Art Gallery will present its fourth exhibition this year, “Parable of the Garden: New Media Art from Iran and Central Asia” from February 20 through March 30. An opening reception will be held on Wednesday, February 20 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the gallery, on the first floor of Holman Hall. A gallery discussion with the curators will be held just before the reception at 4:00 p.m.

The exhibit, which geographically focuses on former Persia and its cultural legacy, presents recent media works by artists from countries that were once part of the great empire. The show features the works of ten artists or collaborative teams hailing from Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

Two of the artists now live in Europe, but the rest remain in Central Asia, and all engage in the cultural dialogue of place and identity. The media in which they work include digital photography, video, installation, and graphic design.

The exhibit, curated by Sarah Cunningham, TCNJ gallery director and Deborah Hutton, TCNJ associate professor of art, and Leeza Ahmady, independent curator and recognized expert on contemporary art from Central Asia, thematically explores not only the traditional garden and the contemporary sense of place, but also notions of paradise lost and found, lessons learned and forgotten, and traditions cherished and rejected.

After the artists and artworks were selected, Dr. Hutton gave students in her fall 2007 Arts of Iran course the semester-long project of researching and writing about the individual artists, the thematic focus of the exhibition, and the region’s complex history. Students completed research through email interviews with the artists, in-class discussion with each other and the exhibit curators, class lectures, and individually collected data. Excerpts from the student’s final research papers provide a useful context in which to situate the works on display in the gallery.

Please visit www.tcnj.edu/~tcag for gallery information. Regular gallery hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 12pm-7pm and Sunday 1pm -3pm. The gallery will be closed from March 9-16 for Spring Break. Tours are available by appointment. Please email tcag@tcnj.edu.

The exhibit is sponsored by the TCNJ Department of Art, the School of the Arts and Communication, and the Committee for Cultural and Intellectual Community (CCIC). It is also made possible in part by the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission through funding from the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. This exhibit is part of Asian Contemporary Art Week (3/15-24/08, www.acaw.net)

Featured Artists:

Vyacheslav Akhunov
Muratbek Djoumaliev & Gulnara Kasmalieva
Shahram Entekhabi
Simin Keramati
Khosro Khosravi
Erbossyn Meldibekov
Almagul Menlibayeva
Rahraw Omarzad/Center for Contemporary Art Afghanistan
Karan Reshad/Kolah Studio
Alexander Ugay

RELIGION, CULTURE & IDENTITY PROGRAM

This exhibit is a part of TCNJ's 2007-2008 program, "Religion, Culture and Identity." In addition to an interdisciplinary sequence of courses, this and the other events in the program highlight the evolution of personal and social identity as shaped by different global religions and their cultures, the varied expressions of religious experience in writings, art, film, and music, and its relation to other cultural, social, and political developments of the past and present. The events are co-sponsored by CCIC, the Religious Studies Committee, the School of the Arts and Communication, and the School of Culture & Society.

About The College of New Jersey

TCNJ currently is ranked as one of the 75 "Most Competitive" schools in the nation by Barron's Profiles of American Colleges, is rated the No. 1 public institution in the northern region of the country by U.S. News & World Report, and is one of Kiplinger's Personal Finance's top educational values in the country. In 2006, the College joined an elite group of institutions when it was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Fewer than 10 percent of the nation's colleges and universities share this honor.

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