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| **LIVING SPACES: A MULTIMEDIA AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM** *An Exhibition, Performance and Talk that Explores the Relationship Between Art, Research and the Physical and Imagined Spaces of our Environment* February 25, 2003 - Hartford, CT Contact: Maryland Grier [maryland.grier@icrweb.org](mailto:maryland.grier@icrweb.org) (860) 278-2044, ext. 228 Colleen Coleman [colleen.coleman@icrweb.org](mailto:colleen.coleman@icrweb.org) (860) 278-2044, ext. 310 |
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| The Institute for Community Research (ICR) is launching **"Living Spaces"** - a program of events focused on the interaction of our physical and imagined spaces - with an arts exhibit and performances presenting the work of ten artists from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. The show opens on March 27th, 4:30 - 9:00 p.m. at the Institute's Community Gallery, 2 Hartford Square West, Suite 100 (corner of Wyllys & Charter Oak Streets) in Hartford, CT. The exhibition runs through May 30, 2003.  Guest speakers for the event are internationally-known, Rick Lowe, Founder of Project Row Houses in Houston, TX and winner of the 2002 Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities. Says Lowe, "We are living in a time where artists have to play a more active role in the designing of living, urban, and community spaces. As the corporate model for the design of living spaces become more prevalent, artists will have to challenge the model by finding opportunities to create more workable designs." Evelyn Phillips, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology, Central State Connecticut University will speak from a researcher's perspective about "Living Spaces" based on some of her work on individual and collective identity.  The ten artists represent visual, literary and performance arts, and explore the theme of "Living Spaces" from a variety of viewpoints and perspectives. For example, New York artist Isaac Diggs addresses issues of leisure, gender, race and sexuality in his photography series, "Mixed Messages". The series documents one of the recreation rituals of African-American young adults, "Greek fest" at Jones Beach on Long Island, and explores how the beach is a backdrop for a ritual that blurs public and private spaces. In contrast, Massachusetts-based artist Stephanie Maria explores living spaces in the forms of houses, and the relationship between these physical infrastructures and the human lives in which they inhabit.  Colleen L. Coleman, Artistic Director of the exhibition comments on why these artists were selected by posing the following question: "Does an artist create as a response to life or is the creative process life itself? The artists in this show are coming from both points of view. These artists create work representing a myriad of view points--engaging spiritual, personal and world views, stated Coleman." Artists featured in the exhibit are: Dana Ganssle, performance, Yedalis Ruiz, literary, and Deborah A. Simmons, visual, (CT), Betsy Alwin, Alice Arnold, Claudia Sohrens, Isaac Diggs, visual artists, and Courtney E. Martin, literary (NY), Aileen Bassis, visual, (NJ) and Stephanie Maria, visual (MA).  "The Institute for Community Research has a long history of bringing together artistic expression and research," states Jean J. Schensul, Ph.D., Executive Director of ICR. " 'Living Spaces' is expanding our experience by engaging artists, researchers and the public in a variety of ways to discuss issues of urban development, access, economic and social power, and identity." In addition to bringing their work to Hartford for the exhibit, the ten artists participated in a dialogue recently with researchers from the Institute and other community members. The dialogue was designed as the first step in exploring the program's theme; participants discussed commonalities in  the way artists and researchers work. "As a community-based, social science researcher with little artistic background and experience, I wasn't sure how my participation in the dialogue would be of value to the process," stated Margaret Weeks, Associate Director of ICR. "I quickly discovered, however, that the way we researchers approach our work is often similar to the creative processes of artists…it's simply that our methods and outcomes differ."  As part of the "Living Spaces" program, ICR is also sponsoring a series of additional events that continue to explore the theme. Community Conversations: Public Dialogue Schedule: May 1st - 5:30 - 7:30 pm will feature a panel of artists, housing advocates, policymakers, urban planners and researchers; May 29th - 5:30 - 7:30 pm will feature a panel of local artists and community activists.  "Living Spaces" is a component of the Institute's public programming, featuring work and activities connected to the organization's community-based research and community partnerships. Gallery hours are 12:00-4:00 p.m. weekdays. For more information about the exhibit, call Colleen L. Coleman at 860-278-2044, x310 or Maryland Grier, Assoc. Director, Communications at x228. |