

Jersey City Museum

Trappings

September 22, 2004 - January 9, 2005

For immediate release

Contact: Linda Onorevole

Phone: 201-716-1709; 973-698-7517 (after 6pm)

Fax: 201-413-9922

Email: lonorevole@jerseycitymuseum.org

September 2, 2004, Jersey City, New Jersey: Women of diverse backgrounds from Jersey City gathered throughout August for informal interviews that asked a single question regarding power and personal identity: "what do you wear that makes you feel powerful?" This question was asked by Two Girls Working, the collaborative team of artists Tiffany Ludwig and Renee Piechocki, who are currently artists-in-residence at the Jersey City Museum. The related exhibition *Trappings* opens at the Jersey City Museum on September 22.

Two Girls Working position themselves as assets to civic action and dialogue. Dismayed by the lack of dialogue about contemporary feminism among their peers, Two Girls Working launched *Trappings* in June 2001. Since that time, the artists have interviewed 260 women at 35 interview sessions. A wide range of women have come to the *Trappings* interview sessions, from diesel engineers and community volunteers to fashion-industry executives, artists, and elected officials. *Trappings* sessions have been hosted by groups including: a quilting-circle, an after-school group for at-risk teenage women, a drag-king performance team, the board and staff of a YWCA, and a university mentor program.

Trappings, a national, multi-media artwork that explores the complicated landscape of power and its relationship to personal identity, has initiated a range of dialogues: simple descriptions of an outfit's comfort and practicality as a tool for power, complex analysis of an individual's movement through class and social strata, the use of sex as strategy in business and social settings, and the use of clothing as a way to connect with cultural or personal history as power sources.

Unlike some dialogue projects that do not exist beyond the performance, *Trappings* extends the impact of the interview sessions through carefully considered multi-media installations. The *Trappings* exhibition designed for the Jersey City Museum has several components including a series of digital photographic prints and complete audio and video interviews of select project participants, presented in the Panasonic Video Zone and on the museum's voicemail system (extensions 130, 138 or 143.) The images present portraits of women who have attended *Trappings* interview sessions nationally, regionally, and locally. Two series of video works are also included, one that captures the dynamic experience of the interview environment through presenting both the interview participant and their audience, and the second that weaves together edited elements of interviews conveying the wide variety of themes that evolve from the interview question including: Transformation, Sex & Gender, Work, Money, Community, Feminism, Shoes, Social Status, and Family Jewels.

Trappings takes risks by being responsive and not illustrative; blurring the lines between visual art, performance, public art, and oral history; and being committed to reaching out and involving new audiences and voices in artistic practice and dialogue.

Two Girls Working has developed *Trappings* installations for solo and group exhibitions in North Carolina and New York. In addition to the Jersey City Museum *Trappings* exhibition, they are currently preparing an installation at the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council in Oxford, MS (June 2005) and the Nashville International Airport (September 2005).

Trappings will be at the Jersey City Museum from September 22, 2004 – January 9, 2005. A final session of the interviews will be held at the museum on Saturday, October 16. Women are invited to participate and may do so by contacting Two Girls Working at their website: www.twogirlsworking.com. Two Girls Working's interviews for the Jersey City Museum exhibition has been funded by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's Artists and Communities Grant Program.

Jersey City Museum is located at 350 Montgomery Street in the Historic Downtown District of the city, within walking distance of the Grove Street PATH and Jersey Avenue Light Rail stations. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$2 for senior, students, free for members and kids under 12. Galleries are open Wednesday and Friday from 11am to 5pm, Thursday from 11am to 8pm and weekends from 12pm to 5pm. For more information visit <http://www.jerseycitymuseum.org> or call 201-413-0303.

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