

PRESS RELEASE
**CYNTHIA L. FRAULA-HAHN TO SPEAK ON WOMEN ARTISTS FOR WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH**

Contact: Geraldine W. Kiefer, Assistant Professor of Art History and Art,
Shenandoah University, 540-545-7323; gkiefer@su.edu

On Tuesday, March 7, 2006 at 7:30 p.m., Cynthia Fraula-Hahn will present a public lecture on Mexican modernist artist Frida Kahlo at the Shenandoah University History and Tourism Center, 20 South Cameron Street, Winchester. The lecture will be paired with the opening of the exhibition "Celebrating Women's History Month: The Art and Scholarship of Cynthia Fraula-Hahn and Helen Langa." Ms. Fraula-Hahn's paintings will highlight the exhibition, which will be on view in Room 213 of the center through the end of the month. Also on March 7, the artist will engage students on the SU main campus with an interactive presentation on Italian 17th-century painter Artemisia Gentileschi. This will take place WHERE from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Finally, College of Lifelong Learning students will hold an informal conversation with Ms. Fraula-Hahn on Wednesday, March 8 from 2 to 3:30 p.m., in Room 213 of the History and Tourism Center.

Cynthia Fraula-Hahn's paintings, assemblages and installations have been exhibited in individual and group shows, from the eastern seaboard (Baltimore, Washington D.C., New York and her native Winchester) to South Korea and Hawaii. In a review of her work, Wendy Mayer stated that "her vision suggests transcendence, and indeed, her style is always evolving. . . into the tapestry of her own regional history. Her brushwork interprets soulful landscapes, defined not by their familiarity, but by their otherworldiness."

Ms. Fraula-Hahn's interest in women artists has evolved through extensive studies in graduate school. "My research and discoveries on women artists made me realize that this information should be available through the slide library in the School of the Arts library at VCU. I gave lectures and instituted a women's art section for the slide library. I then researched feminist artists and definitions of feminist art."

Artemisia Gentileschi, Ms. Fraula-Hahn avers, was "a woman ahead of her time. Artemisia is considered the most important female artist of the 17th century." Her paintings depict heroic scenes and figures in the grand figurative tradition of her predecessor Michelangelo and in the dark manner of her contemporary Caravaggio. However, Fraula-Hahn states, "she refused to be bound by the conventions imposed on female artists of her time." Gentileschi's heroic paintings of female heroines, such as Judith slaying Holofernes and Susannah and the Elders, are, Fraula-Hahn says, "as compelling as her life's journey. She was looked upon as an oddity or exotic, and used that reputation/celebrity to become an independent woman and eminent painter."

Fraula-Hahn describes Mexican 20th-century painter Frida Kahlo as a woman who "forged a place in the art world that was completely her own." "Frida's striking, often shocking self portraits capture her turbulent personal history on canvas,"

Fraula- Hahn says. Kahlo's work foregrounds the artist herself in dimensionally real self portraits, wherein pain and tribulation coexist with transcendence and transmutation. Her very personal work garnered an international audience. Fraula-Hahn explains that "as the wife of world-renowned Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, Frida had entrée to and frequented international art circles during the 1930s. A woman of enormous strength and determination, Kahlo was an active participant in the social, economic and political landscape that characterized a time of worldwide turmoil."

Ms. Fraula-Hahn will be exhibiting her paintings inspired by Frida Kahlo at the SU Women's History Month exhibition. Titles include *Frida and Dr. Farrik*, *The Many Fridas*, and *Frida's Last Supper*.

Cynthia Fraula-Hahn received her M.F.A. in painting and printmaking, as well as her B.F.A. in art history, from Virginia Commonwealth University. She also studied interior design at the University of Maryland in College Park. The lectures and exhibition celebrating her art and scholarship are generously supported by a gift from Virginia-Wojno Forney and the Shenandoah University Women's Studies program. All events are free and open to the public.
