

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**HELEN LANGA TO DISCUSS PRINTMAKING FOR THE PEOPLE AND WOMEN**  
**PRINTMAKERS AT SU DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

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On Wednesday, March 29, 2006 at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Helen Langa will present a public lecture entitled "Art for the People: Transforming American Printmaking in the 1930s" at the Shenandoah University History and Tourism Center, 20 South Cameron Street, Winchester. The lecture will also include the opening of the exhibition, "Celebrating Women's History Month: The Art and Scholarship of Cynthia Fraula-Hahn and Helen Langa." On Thursday, March 30, Dr. Langa will focus on twentieth-century women artists with SU students. Her talk and discussion, "Reconstructing Modernism: American Women Printmakers, Adventurous Choices, and New Possibilities," will take place in (Henkel 107), on the SU main campus from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Dr. Langa is an associate professor of art history at American University in Washington, D.C., specializing in the art of the United States of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her research interests in women printmakers, radical politics, leftist art and the intersections of labor and art during the Depression and New Deal years led to the publication of her book, *Radical Art: Printmaking and the Left in 1930s New York* (University of California Press, 2004). Hailed by *Art Times/Css Publications* as "a comprehensive look at one of the turning points in the history of American Art" and by American art scholar Wanda Corn as a "beautifully nuanced study [that] reaffirms the primacy of politically engaged printmaking in the 1930s," the book covers major new ground. Americanist Betsy Fahlman states that "there is no better explicator of the graphic arts of this era and their cultural context than Helen Langa."

In her public lecture on Wednesday evening, Professor Langa will present an overview of the territory of American printmaking in the thirties. She will explore "how activist artists. . . navigated society's contradictory interests in cultural democracy, stylistic innovation, gender egalitarianism, and social justice." Dr. Langa will show that "prints addressing labor rights, antiracism, and antifascism reveal a variety of strategic decisions and have to be read as historically contextualized statements."

In her SU talks on Thursday morning, Dr. Langa will look at American women printmakers. She will show how "adventurous choices" and "new possibilities" for women artists coexisted with "tensions between concepts of modernity and modernism," not to mention "the politics of representation, the support or constraint of bureaucratic supervision, and the desire to build a mass audience." Gender issues will also be discussed. In her article "Egalitarian Vision, Gendered Experience: Women Printmakers and the WPA/FAP Graphic Arts Project," Dr. Langa explained that "conceptions of gender difference were both expressed and

repressed in their working relationships and in the artistic choices that inflected their work.”

In addition to Dr. Langa’s book, *Radical Art*, copies of her recent articles and chapter essays will be displayed in the SU Women’s History Month exhibition. (The exhibition will also include enlarged reproductions of selected 1930s prints.)

Professor Langa received her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, her M.A. from the University of Colorado-Boulder and her B.F.A. from Temple University. The lectures and exhibition celebrating her scholarship are generously supported by a gift from Virginia-Wojno Forney. All events are free and open to the public.

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