

For Immediate Release:

SOMMER SCHOOL - Art, Education and Frederick Sommer

Exhibition dates: August 28 - September 25, 2009

Opening Reception: August 28, 2009, 6:00 - 9:00 PM

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The Prescott College Art Gallery at Sam Hill Warehouse presents *SOMMER SCHOOL - Art, Education and Frederick Sommer*. This 45 piece exhibition includes photographs, drawings, paintings and collages, all of which were made during the sixty-four years the internationally acclaimed artist, Frederick Sommer resided in Prescott, Arizona. Organized to show the full range of work created by this unique, multi-sided, aesthetically minded Prescottonian, *SOMMER SCHOOL* shares the variety of creative methods Sommer employed to fuel his own remarkable artistic evolution. Sommer was a man of protean creativity who lived a simple yet extraordinary life.

Born in Italy in 1905 and raised in Brazil, Sommer showed an early interest in design, art and architecture, which lead to opportunities to work with his father on garden and Landscape Architecture projects for the city of Rio de Janiero. He first came to the United States in 1925 and worked as a personal assistant to the head of Cornell's Landscape Architecture Department, a relationship that concluded with a Master Degree he received in 1927. Sommer met his wife Frances while they were both at Cornell. They married in 1928, returned to Rio, where within two years, Frederick contracted tuberculosis. Two weeks after the diagnosis, they were on their way to Europe for a cure year in Switzerland. In 1931, they return to the U.S. at the beginning of the great Depression. They settled in Arizona, first in Tucson and then in 1935, Prescott. Frances was employed by the State as a social worker, allowing Frederick to stay at home and pursue his interests in studying History and Philosophy while making art. He taught at the Institute of Design, Chicago in 1957 - 58. In 1966, Sommer became the Coordinator of Fine Arts Studies at Prescott College, a position he held through 1971. The Sommers died peacefully at home, 11 weeks apart, in 1999.

Sommer's photographs, drawings and collages are in the collections of premier art institutions around the world - the Museum of Modern Art, Princeton University Art Museum, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Center for Creative Photography, U of AZ (which houses the Sommer Archive). His two most recent publications are - *The Art of Frederick Sommer* (Yale /FFSF, 2005) and *At the Crossroad of American Photography: Callahan, Siskind and Sommer* (Radius Press, 2009).

Also in the gallery, is a small exhibit of recent work by the recipients of the Frederick and Frances Sommer Arts and Letters Fellowship at Prescott College. Awarded through an application process, the Sommer Fellowship supports one artistically merited student for their senior year by providing free housing in the simple cabin and studio environment Sommer evolved to facilitate his own need and commitment to study, work and create with words and images.

Join us for the opening reception of *SOMMER SCHOOL* on Friday, August 28, 2009, 6:00 - 9:00 pm at the Prescott College Art Gallery at Sam Hill Warehouse, 232 N. Granite Street, Prescott, Arizona. For more information contact the Prescott College Art Gallery 928.776.5258 ext. 5. This exhibit is on view Tuesdays - Saturdays, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, through September 25, 2009. Other related events include an informative question and answer session in the gallery on September 5th at 1:00 pm with Sommer Foundation Trustee and former Sommer assistant Naomi Lyons. A special Sommer Foundation on site visit is scheduled for September 12th starting at 1:00 pm. Attendance will be limited so please contact the gallery if you are interested (928.776.5258 ext. 5). The exhibition will close on September 25 with an evening gallery talk, Insights into Sommer, by the exhibition curator and former Sommer darkroom assistant, Naomi Lyons at 6:00 pm (during the 4th Friday Artwalk).

This exhibit is made possible through the generosity of the Frederick and Frances Sommer Foundation, with additional funding from Arizona Commission on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Clowes Fund, Inc., Prescott Area Arts & Humanities Council, and the City of Prescott.