

**“GIRLS ON FILM” – ARTISTS’ INSTALLATION INSPIRED BY RESTORED  
VINTAGE FILM TO BE PRESENTED AT HARVARD’S SERT GALLERY  
JULY 16 – SEPTEMBER 18, 2005**

*Artists Reveal and Reinterpret Captivating Imagery from Discarded Film Leaders*

CAMBRIDGE, MA (July 8, 2005)—Opening at the Harvard University Art Museums this month is *Girls on Film*, an installation by artists Julie Buck and Karin Segal of 70 photographs depicting female film-studio workers who posed for what are known as color-timing control strips. Buck and Segal retrieved these beguiling images from discarded film leaders—usually blank film attached to the ends of a print to protect it from damage when it is threaded through a projector. They created the photographic prints in the installation by restoring, editing, and enlarging selected frames.



Julie Buck and Karin Segal, after an unknown studio cameraman, 2004. *Girl # 4*. 12 x 15 in. Image courtesy of the artists.

On view July 16 through September 18, 2005, at Harvard’s Sert Gallery in the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, *Girls on Film* presents the artists’ interpretation of this provocative imagery in a panoramic display that forms a continuous work of art. A tension develops between the found images and the formal and material effects the artists achieve with their edited and enlarged prints.

The installation foregrounds a technical process in film that is normally hidden from public view. “Through their compelling retrieval of these formerly discarded and anonymous images, Julie Buck and Karin Segal offer insight into a little-known aspect of film production,” said Thomas W. Lentz, Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard University Art

Museums. “In the process, they introduce a type of image that should offer a new point of entry into discussions of both the cinema and its representations of women.”

Color timing is a fundamental tool the film industry used from the 1920s to the 1990s to establish visual continuity between shots that may have been filmed over several months, under different lighting conditions, and even on different film stocks. Color-timing strips—or “China Girls,” as they came to be known—were film frames of variously posed women that technicians in the processing lab used to achieve consistent color balance and tonal density throughout a film. Women’s skin was thought to offer a particularly nuanced tonal gauge. Some of the women posing for these shots were lab secretaries or technicians; others were models or actresses hired for the job.

Although these shots had a utilitarian purpose, the way the women were posed, lit, and filmed often mimicked the representational codes of commercial cinema. As the artists note, “If it were just about a [color] standard, no more than 20 prototypes would have been necessary. Obviously, the format offered an opportunity to play out poses that were a lot more than functional.” Perhaps as a result, these color-timing control strips took on a life of their own, sometimes reappearing as “pin-ups” in projection booths, for example. According to a lab technician familiar with the genre, says Buck, some of the most appealing of these strips were reproduced more than even the most successful Hollywood films.

Both artists conceive of their practice as rescuing these women from the margins of cinema, recasting them as movie stars in their own right. It was the creative exploitation of the format and the obsolescence of the functional device, however, that initially attracted Buck and Segal to these images. “As with so many processes, color timing is now accomplished digitally,” said Segal. “It is ironic, therefore, that the very digital technology that allowed us to recover and rework these images—elevating them to the status of icons or portraits—has also made them all but disappear from the film industry.”

### **About the Artists**

Julie Buck and Karin Segal have worked in the film and art fields for the last 10 years. *Girls on Film*, their latest project, premiered at the Courthouse Gallery at the Anthology Film Archive in New York City in February 2005 before traveling to Harvard.

JULIE BUCK, born in 1974 in Walnut Creek, California, is the head of conservation at the Harvard Film Archive. She has a degree in film history from Brigham Young University and a certificate in film preservation from George Eastman House. Buck has taught film at several Boston institutions and has curated film series throughout the Northeast. Buck is also a collage artist. She currently resides in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

KARIN RYWKIND SEGAL, born in 1973 in Tel Aviv, holds a degree in fine arts from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem and has exhibited her art in Boston, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv while curating film and video series in Boston. She is the assistant conservator and publicist at the Harvard Film Archive and resides in Boston.

## **Programming**

Exhibition Opening Reception  
Sert Gallery, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts  
Friday, July 22, 6:00–8:00 p.m.  
Free to the public.

## **Gallery Talks**

Sert Gallery, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts  
Free admission.

Saturday, July 16, 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, September 10, 11:30 a.m.

*Jacob Proctor, Ruth V S Lauer Curatorial Assistant, Department of Prints, Fogg Art Museum, and Ph.D. candidate, History of Art and Architecture*

Saturday, July 23, 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, August 6, 11:30 a.m.

*Julie Buck and Karin Segal, artists*

## **Film Program**

The Harvard Film Archive will present a program of experimental films on September 16 at 9 p.m. to complement *Girls on Film*. Each of the films in the program represents a different artist's engagement with found footage. The program will include films by Boston-based filmmakers Abigail Child and Saul Levine, as well as work by Craig Baldwin, Bruce Conner, Hollis Frampton, Ken Jacobs, Owen Land, and Peter Tscherkassky.

Tickets:

\$8 Regular Admission

\$6 Students, Harvard Faculty and Staff, Senior Citizens

The Harvard Film Archive is located at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, 24 Quincy Street, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. East of the Harvard Square Red Line T Stop and next to the Fogg Art Museum. Just one block north of Massachusetts Avenue between Broadway and Harvard Street in the Harvard University campus. [www.harvardfilmarchive.org](http://www.harvardfilmarchive.org)

## About the Harvard University Art Museums

The Harvard University Art Museums form one of the world's leading arts institutions, with the Arthur M. Sackler, Busch-Reisinger, and Fogg art museums, the Straus Center for Conservation, and the U.S. headquarters for the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, an excavation project in western Turkey.

The Harvard University Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. As an integral part of the Harvard community, the three art museums serve as resources for all students, adding a special dimension to their areas of study. The public is welcome to experience the collections and exhibitions as well as to enjoy lectures, symposia, and other programs.

For more than a century, the Harvard University Art Museums have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and scholars and are renowned for their role in the development of the discipline of art history in this country.

## Location and Hours

The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, 24 Quincy Street, is located next to the Fogg and Busch-Reisinger museums at 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge. The Sert Gallery is on the second floor adjoining the Museums' Sert Gallery café. The Arthur M. Sackler Museum is nearby at 485 Broadway. Each Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station.

Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sunday 1–5 p.m.; the Museums are closed on national holidays. Admission is \$7.50; \$6 for seniors; \$6 for students; and free for those under 18 years of age. The Museums are free to everyone on Saturday mornings, 10 a.m.–noon. Admission to the Sert Gallery is free. The Harvard University Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. More detailed information is available at 617-495-9400 or on the Internet at [www.artmuseums.harvard.edu](http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu).

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*For more information on this exhibition or the Harvard University Art Museums, please contact:*

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