FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DELaware Art Museum Presents First Exhibition of Photographs by Scott Heiser

Wilmington, DE (December 13, 2013) – The Delaware Art Museum is pleased to present the first retrospective exhibition dedicated to the photographer Scott Heiser (1949–1993), a Wilmington, Delaware native. Fashion, Circus, Spectacle: Photographs by Scott Heiser, on view March 8 – June 1, 2014, introduces the accomplishments of Heiser's vibrant career, presenting 80 stunning black-and-white prints produced by the artist, as well as a slideshow of his seldom-seen color photographs. Heiser’s images document the cultural cross-pollination of art, fashion, and photography in New York in the 1970s and 80s.

Heiser was best known for his grainy, wildly cropped glimpses of fashion runway shows, which appeared in Interview between 1978 and 1986. The magazine sent him around New York, Paris, and Milan to capture fashions by Claude Montana, Yves Saint Laurent, Shamask, and Issey Miyake. He provided an insider’s view of the shows and captured the movement of the clothing and the energy of the scene.

Heiser also chronicled the vibrant cultural landscape of New York City, producing portraits of Andy Warhol, Jamie Wyeth, Debbie Harry, Marianne Faithfull, Alberta Hunter, and Robert Wilson for Interview, Soho Weekly News, and Paper. In the early 1980s, Heiser expanded his field, beginning to document a wide range of public entertainments, including circuses, dance competitions, the Miss America Pageant, the Ice Capades, and the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

He brought a unique perspective to his subjects, focusing on significant details, arresting figures in motion, and capturing individuals on the fringes of large events. His extreme angles and eccentric cropping intensified the strangeness of these performances, drawing comparisons with Surrealist photographers like Man Ray and André Kertész. Heiser was also influenced by earlier photographers, such as Cecil Beaton, George Platt Lynes, Diane Arbus, and Garry Winogrand.
Although his work was published and shown frequently during his lifetime, Heiser has never been the subject of a museum exhibition, and no monograph about him has been published. The Delaware Art Museum owns nine of his fashion photographs, which were the inspiration for this exhibition.

“When I encountered these photographs in storage, I was captivated by the dramatic compositions and beautiful printing,” explains Heather Campbell Coyle, Curator of American Art at the Delaware Art Museum. “I couldn't believe that he wasn't better known. It is such an exciting opportunity to rediscover his photographs and present them again to the world.”

About the Catalogue

A richly illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition. Heather Campbell Coyle and Dr. Stephen Petersen (Instructor, Corcoran College of Art and Design) have written essays that situate Heiser in the context of photography, film, and art in downtown New York. In addition, associates of the artist—Hilton Als (writer and theater critic, The New Yorker) and Tom Woodruff (professor, School of Visual Arts)—provide short contributions. The hardcover book is 136 pages and will be distributed by University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sponsors and Organizers

Fashion, Circus, Spectacle: Photographs by Scott Heiser was organized by the Delaware Art Museum. This exhibition is generously supported by the Johannes R. and Betty P. Krahmer American Art Exhibition Fund. Additional support is provided by grants from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency dedicated to nurturing and supporting the arts in Delaware, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

About the Delaware Art Museum

Founded in 1912, the Delaware Art Museum is best known for its large collection of works by Wilmington native Howard Pyle and fellow American illustrators, a major collection of British Pre-Raphaelite art, and urban landscapes by John Sloan and his circle. Visitors can also enjoy the outdoor Copeland Sculpture Garden and a number of special exhibitions throughout the year.

The Delaware Art Museum, located at 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE 19806, is open Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Sunday noon – 4:00 p.m. Admission fees are charged as follows: Adults (19–59) $12, Seniors (60+) $10, Students (with valid ID) $6, Youth (7–18) $6, and Children (6 and under) free. Admission fees are waived every Sunday thanks to support from
generous individuals. For more information, call 302-571-9590 or 866-232-3714 (toll free), or visit the website at delart.org.

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