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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 12, 2017



**THE SHELDON ART GALLERIES OPENS INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT  
BY FILMMAKER AND ARTIST JILL EVANS PETZALL**

ST. LOUIS, MO - The Sheldon Art Galleries presents *Jill Evans Petzall: Still Lives With Stories*, October 6, 2017 – January 20, 2018 in the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Gallery. **An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, October 6 from 5 – 7 p.m.** Galleries are open until 9 p.m. for First Fridays in Grand Center. The Sheldon Art Galleries are open Tuesdays, Noon – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays - Fridays, Noon – 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission. Admission is free. For more information on exhibitions, visit the galleries' website at [TheSheldon.org](http://TheSheldon.org). *The exhibition is made possible by Carol and Ira Bergman, Mary and Steven Schoolman, Joseph Evans, Capes Sokol, Karen Kalish, Susan Block and Freida Smith, Nancy Kalishman, J. David and Lucy Levy, Nina Needleman, Susan Hacker Stang, Carol Salomon, Deborah Obrien and Richard Seiter, Nancy and Stan Feldman, Kim Gladstone, Zora Hanko, Michelle and Scott Harris, Sally Levy and many others.*



**Gallery Talk: Tuesday, October 10 at 6 p.m.**

Jill Evans Petzall will talk about the concept and process of the exhibition. Admission free, but reservations are required. Contact Paula Lincoln at [plincoln@thesheldon.org](mailto:plincoln@thesheldon.org) or 314-533-9900 x37.

Emmy Award-winning filmmaker and artist Jill Evans Petzall interrogates the notion of the fickleness of meaning within travel and snapshot photography, and the perpetuation of Western values throughout the world in her innovative interactive exhibition. Her photographs, shot in Southeast Asia, of strangely static human bodies, become metaphorical “still lives” where gallery

visitors can invent and record their own stories about the images, adding their unique interpretations to the installation.

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The exhibit uses digital media, photographs and community interaction to explore how ingrained biases and stereotypes travel across borders, affecting our attitudes about cultures unlike our own. The interactive installation actively engages viewers to explore what photography does to them and to the world alike. At the core of the exhibit are photographs that Petzall shot over three years while in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Singapore. Blending a documentary-style approach with poetic imagery, the viewpoint is one of an inquisitive and critical traveler.

Petzall's metaphorical "still life" photographs in this multi-tiered installation are first presented as a continuous, morphing series of paired images on a 70-inch HDTV monitor, revealing an ironic, sometimes humorous, parallel between posing tourists and mannequins. The diptych monitor display images are interspersed with quotes by well-known authors, critics and artists including John Berger, John Cage, Michael Ondaatje, Susan Sontag, Alfred Stieglitz and others. Also on view is the entire series of 58 individual photographs from the diptych monitor presentation, so that visitors may view single images at their own pace.

Separately, some images are connected to recorded stories from a diverse range of people whom the artist recorded over the months prior to the exhibit opening. From now until the exhibit closes, Petzall will be integrating more and more curated, recorded stories on playback monitors for gallery visitors to sample. Some of these recorded stories will also play in a surround-sound, low ambient soundscape throughout the gallery. A related website also offers the entire range of images with stories, providing the chance for a wider general public to see, hear and share the stories through social media. The website will be launched at the opening, October 6, at [stilliveswithstories.com](http://stilliveswithstories.com).

Visitors will also be able to schedule a recording session to tell their own stories in dialogue with the artist on selected days. Petzall invites viewers to place their minds inside the photographic frames and have fun participating in the exhibition. Her photographs and visitors' corresponding (often contradictory) ideas will ask all viewers to question the longstanding relationship between photography, memory and truth. Selections of these recordings will become a lasting part of the artwork. Recording schedule information can be found at [TheSheldon.org](http://TheSheldon.org).

Jill Evans Petzall is a four-time Emmy award-winning filmmaker, media artist, writer and teacher whose main themes are social justice and the arts. Her works have been shown on broadcast and cable television, in art galleries and international film festivals, and used as advocacy tools in state legislatures and non-profit agencies throughout the United States and Canada. Her awards include a Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) Award, the Henry Hampton Award for Excellence in Film & Digital Media, and the Maya Angelou Award, National Poetry Association & Television Literacy. Her films and multi-media installations have been shown at the American Film Institute (AFI), Los Angeles; Center for Creative Arts (COCA), St. Louis; Churchill Memorial Museum, Fulton, MO; Goethe Institute, Los Angeles; Missouri History Museum, St. Louis; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and the Saint Louis Art Museum.

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**Image caption:** Jill Evans Petzall, *Still Life, Vietnam, #17*, archival pigment print, 8 x 10 inches; HD digital screen display and website [stilliveswithstories.com](http://stilliveswithstories.com). Courtesy of the Artist.