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For Immediate Release

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Offered in conjunction with the Northern Illinois University Art Museum’s upcoming Southeast Asian Exhibition Suite, Karen: A People on the Border chronicles the lives of the Karen people as they have struggled to survive on the Thai-Burma border since 1962 and cope with the repercussions of a 60-year civil war. This exhibition featuring the documentary photography of Robert Gerhardt will run from August 28th – November 17th with a public reception on September 13th from 4:30pm – 6:00pm.

Robert Gerhardt received his B.A. in Anthropology/Sociology and Art History from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA in 1999. In 2007, he earned his M.F.A. in Photography from the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University in Boston, MA. He currently works as a Digital Photographer at the Whitney Museum of American Art and has lived and worked in New York City since 1999.

Gerhardt photographed the Karen people within the border town of Mae Sot, Thailand in 2006, documenting the challenges they face as they deal with continuous warfare, destruction, poverty and exploitation. Gerhardt attributes the success of this documentary series to the Karen people: “The photographs in this body of work are the result of my being granted access to the lives of the Karen people by the Karen people. Without their trust in letting me into their world, this project would not have been possible.”

Karen: A People on the Border will be offered in conjunction with the Cambodia Studies Conference, September 13th – 16th and the International Burma Studies Conference, October 5th – 7th at Northern Illinois University. For more information visit: http://www.cseas.niu.edu/cseas/conferences and http://www.grad.niu.edu/burma.

The NIU Art Museum is located on the first floor, west end of Altgeld Hall, on the campus of Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, 60115. Hours are Tuesday through Friday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. Group tours may be arranged by appointment. More information may be found on our website: www.niu.edu/artmuseum.

Support for this exhibition was provided by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the Dean’s Circle of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at NIU; and the Friends of the NIU Art Museum.

(MORE)
Photo: Robert Gerhardt
“Young Girl in the Market, Mae Sot, Thailand” (2006)
Photograph on loan from the University of Saint Francis Permanent Collection, Fort Wayne, IN – School of the Creative Arts

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