

For Immediate Release:

The NIU Art Museum, DeKalb, IL Presents ***The Mayor of Palookaville***: Hand-printed, hand-bound books by David Johnson, March 24 – May 9, 2009.

Johnson's tools are deceptively simple: relief printing, etching and letterpress. His observations are shrewd, compassionate and introspective views of the people around him and the places they inhabit. Johnson writes that "all my work begins with drawing...with these printmaking methods there is a transformation of the imagery from the drawings to the print." Colors and textures inherent to printmaking can transform a drawing, which is often the structural blueprint on which the richness of color and texture is based.

Individual small prints, while intimate, are often not taken seriously when compared to large paintings or sculpture. The format of a book, however, has a heightened presence as an object and an approachable familiarity that people can relate to. As Walter Hamady, artist and author of "Book Arts in the USA" said, "People will take a book from you and look at it although they may be afraid to involve themselves with a painting or a sculpture. It's the Trojan Horse of art."

This exhibition is part of the NIU Art Museum's spring Printmaking Suite that includes ***Jay Ryan: Flock***, colorful, limited edition silkscreen posters; ***Images of Death and Life***: Käthe Kollwitz prints and ***Moonlight Cocktails are the Thing***: a retrospective of the distinguished career of printmaker and NIU Professor Emeritus, David Driesbach. The reception for the spring Printmaking Suite will be Thursday April 2, from 4:30 – 7:00 p.m.

The NIU Art Museum is located on the first floor, west end of Altgeld Hall, the "castle," at the northwest corner of College and Castle Drives on the NIU campus in DeKalb. The galleries are open to the public Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Saturday 12 noon – 4 p.m., and by appointment for group tours. Special Sunday hours will be held on March 29 from 10:30 – 1:00 in conjunction with the Southern Graphics Council Conference trip to DeKalb for a day of print exhibitions. Exhibitions are free; donations are appreciated. Pay parking is available in the Visitor's Lot on Carroll Avenue and at metered spots in front of Altgeld Hall. Free parking is available on Saturdays and during receptions and visiting artist lectures in the lot northeast of Gilbert and College Drives. The exhibitions of the NIU Art Museum are funded in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, the Friends of the NIU Art Museum, and the Arts Fund 21.

For more information please visit our website: www.niu.edu/artmuseum, telephone 815-753-1936 or e-mail darntzen@niu.edu. Photographs are available upon request.