

Carol Magee sheds light on cultural portrayals in media

Mary-Hayden Britton

Features Editor

While flipping through *Sports Illustrated*, most would not think twice about seeing Kathy Ireland standing tall in her one-piece tribal bathing suit. But at a closer look, a viewer might note of the two Ndebele women sitting on either side the model ethnically dressed matching the theme to the pinup spread.

In society today, association with visualization plays an intricate part in people's lives. The human eye encounters massive amounts of media every day through televisions, computers, magazines, newspapers and film. But with these many images, most do not take the time to analyze what they are viewing.

On Monday, Sept. 15, Carol Magee, an assistant professor of art and a Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow, will be discussing "Sex and Safari: Sports Illustrated Swimsuits in Africa," through a slide show featuring media images represented in different cultures. She will focus on American and African cultures, basing her



Mary-Hayden Britton / Photographer

Carol Magee works at her desk with the photo taken from Sports Illustrated in the background. She will discuss the role of race in the media at 7 p.m. Sept 15 in Yeager Recital Hall.

discussion on a photo taken for a 1996 *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition*. Magee's discussion will be taken from chapters of the book she is currently writing.

Magee said that *Sports Illustrated* is continuing the traditions of African Americans.

Magee said she literally stumbled over the photo in a bookstore and decided photos like this one should be recognized, since media such as *Sports Illustrated* is such a dominant visual literacy in the world today.

Magee said she believes portraying African Americans in this way is superficial and problematic, and is concerned with how images come to influence Americans and their understanding of Africa. However, she said a positive would be letting the world know that tribes such as the Ndebele exist.

The second part of her discussion will stem from how she gathered her research. Magee said she will discuss her experience traveling to South Africa for five weeks, where she spent time with tribes like the Ndebele peoples and others as well.

Kristin Ringelberg, assistant professor of art history, said it is discussions like Magee's that teach about how people think, what they care about and how they present ideas and beliefs unintentionally.

"I think this discussion can have a wide

application and be useful to the Elon community in thinking more self-consciously about visual representations," she said.

Magee graduated from the University of California with a degree in art history. After college, she said she decided she wanted to seek her graduate degree in the study of african american art.

She said she found out about Elon when she applied for the Woodrow Wilson program, which has a partnership with Elon. She teaches one art history class and does research at the same time.

Magee said this experience has definitely been a good one.

"I think Elon is a really nice community of scholars," she said.

Rindelbergh said more art history speakers are scheduled to visit campus. She said the department's goal is to eventually get a speaker once a month. Whitney Biennia will be speaking in the spring. It is free and open to the public.

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