Sac State professor chronicles water on film

The wealth of California is measured in water, and a Crocker Art Museum exhibit studying that resource will include several photos by Sacramento State film coordinator Jenny Stark.

“Liquid Assets: Perspectives on Water” is a multifaceted, museumwide event presented in partnership with Water, CA, a collaboration of artists, writers, architects and scientists. “Liquid Assets” was inspired by art from the museum’s permanent collection and is designed to show perspectives on how water defines our lives. It runs Oct. 16 through Jan. 8. Related activities include performances, demonstrations, a play and a mini film festival.

Artists were asked to create works in relation to the theme, and Stark was approached for more than a dozen photographs that focused on water in the state’s Delta region.

“Jenny is an amazing artist,” says Enid Baxter Blader of Water, CA. “When we wanted Delta-specific shots, I immediately thought of her.”

Stark notes that there is a sense of transition in the Central Valley, with the recession’s impact on real estate and other businesses. That sense is strong in the Delta, where residents are concerned about the impact that future water laws and projects, such as the Peripheral Canal, will have on their lives, Stark says.

“I’ve tried to capture the world around the Delta and that sense of transition and not knowing what’s going to happen,” she says.

These are not postcard shots. Using 6x7 film, Stark works at dusk and at night, taking pictures with exposure times of up to eight minutes. That gives the photos an other-worldly look.
“The whole shot’s illuminated, and it looks like daytime, but there’s something off-putting about it, because it’s taken when day is transitioning to night,” Stark says.

Most of her Delta work has been concentrated in areas bordered by Walnut Grove, Locke and Ryde because of their islands and canals. “You have the river on one side and this vast landscape of agriculture on the other side,” Stark says.

Stark came to Sacramento State in 2002 and helped organize the University’s film program into an interdisciplinary program. For this project, she preferred working with film instead of a digital camera because of the longer exposure times and the process required to make 24x30 prints.

The Crocker Art Museum is open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday. For ticket prices, more details about “Liquid Assets: Perspectives on Water,” and further information: www.crockerartmuseum.org. For media assistance about Sacramento State, call the University’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

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