



*Contemporary Images
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The Print Center and the Girl Scouts of Southeastern PA collaborate on Solution to Teen Female Body Image Problem

Body Image: A Photo Documentary

Residency: April 21 – June 9, 2002 Exhibition: July 12 – August 17, 2002
Gallery Talk by Ashley Peel: July 12, 5 – 6 pm Opening Reception: July 12, 6 – 8 pm

In a 2000 study entitled “Girls Speak Out: Teens Before Their Time,” it was discovered that pre-teens and teenage girls consider images of women and older teens, especially those in TV and films, as models for themselves. The stress of not being able to meet their own expectations of what society wants them to be, leads young girls to seek ways to change their own appearance, which often leads to self-destructive behaviors. In response to the statement, “I like the way I look” 75% of 3rd graders agreed, while only 56% of 7th graders agreed. This decline in self-approval is the focus of the Girls Scouts Body Image Program. The program was designed to raise awareness in the community about the pervasive impact of an unrealistically ideal body image on teen girls, and examine their struggle for self-approval in comparison to that ideal.

In April, Girl Scouts from the council of Southeastern PA began a seven-week residency program to learn about different photographic techniques from photographer Ashley Peel of The Print Center in Philadelphia. This project is funded in part by a grant from the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance’s 5-County Arts Fund. Peel is teaching the girls the fundamentals of photography as they explore their feelings about their own bodies in relation to their community, school and family environments. The purpose of the program is to offer middle-school aged girls the opportunity to use photography to explore issues of self-image and expand their interest with a fuller understanding of the medium. Over the course of the program, the girls will use photography to record perspectives on body image and visually explore how body image affects people’s lives. This program is part of a larger effort to teach decision making and leadership skills to girls often identified as “at-risk” for self-destructive behaviors. The residency will culminate in an exhibition of the girls’ work at The Print Center from July 12, 2002 to August 17, 2002.

The program will help girls gain self-confidence, learn critical thinking skills, and keep them engaged in a creative positive process. *Body Image: A Photo Documentary* will show the public through the lens of young women, both figuratively and literally, the urgency and immediacy of this problem and how an entire generation of girls may be adversely affected.

Located at 1614 Latimer Street, in the heart of Center City Philadelphia, The Print Center supports printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts. The Print Center presents a variety of programs for the public including 11 exhibitions annually; the longest running annual international competition for prints and photographs in the country; an extensive series of continuing education programs for art professionals and amateurs; a gallery store; and special events.

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