

California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**"Natural Light and Italian Piazza" Exhibit on Display  
In Performing Arts Center Through Nov. 30**

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- An international exhibition of photographs documenting the dynamics of natural light, architecture and people in Italian town plazas is on display in the Performing Arts Center on the Cal Poly campus through Nov. 30.

"Natural Light and the Italian Piazza" is the work of Cal Poly Architecture Professor Emeritus Sandra Davis Lakeman. More than 160 of her images are displayed in a series of installations in the lobbies on all four levels of the Performing Arts Center.

The exhibition will be open to the public in a series of receptions and special events. The first showing will be from 6 to 9 p.m. Aug. 6, when the exhibit will be part of San Luis Obispo's free, monthly Art After Dark event. The photographs also will be available for viewing by ticket holders attending other events in the center.

"Whether as a clear green light coming through fresh young olive leaves, or transferring its rays through crackling thin ice breaking over freshly planted winter wheat, light is the subject," Lakeman said. "Light and the physical landscape or light and architectural form are frequently captured 'contra la luce,' shooting into the light. This assures that light is seen as an entity, not the form and then the effect of the light, but actual light."

Themes of time and timelessness, permanence and impermanence run through the photographs, which were taken over a 12-year period in Siena's Piazza del Campo and other locations in Tuscany.

"To improve the quality of our lives, our sight, our photography or building designs, we must make a conscious effort to become aware of light," Lakeman said. "For designers and architects it is important to

think and to design with light foremost in their minds." The first exhibition of the work was in the town hall of Siena in 1992. The Portland, Ore., Chapter of the American Institute of Architects sponsored a showing in that city, the exhibit's largest showing.

"The stupendous photographs, exhibited for over a month, have enchanted the visiting public with their originality and accomplishment," an Italian reviewer said. "The exhibition is a striking success... a precious jewel... putting the piazza in relation to the play of natural light and shadow.... The result: a series of evocative images forming an exhibition unique in the world." Architecture scholar and critic Kenneth Frampton called the images "both aesthetically beautiful and extremely instructive."

Harvard University's William M.C. Lam, a specialist in designing with light, said, "The collection should appeal to a very wide audience and communicate an awareness of natural light and its properties."

Additional dates of special events during which the exhibit will be open to the public -- most at no charge -- include:

- Sept. 3 and Nov. 5 from 6 to 9 p.m. as part of Art After Dark.
- Sept. 17, 5-8 p.m., an "I Madonnari" artists and donors reception sponsored by the California Central Coast Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design.
- Oct. 13, a Cal Poly Continuing Education Program lecture and tour.
- Dates yet to be announced in conjunction with the College of Architecture and Environmental Design's annual Hearst Lecture Series and for the showing of the film "Woman's Story" by Gary Conway.

Lakeman, who has practiced architecture since 1956, joined the Cal Poly faculty in 1981. She received a Master of Architecture degree in 1977 from the University of Oregon and is a registered architect in Oregon.

Lakeman's photographic work was supported by grants from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the Skaggs Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Siena's town council and Cal Poly. Local support was provided by the California Central Coast Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Robert Richmond, Rob Rossi, Beth Law, Tim Woodle, the Tackle Warehouse, and several Cal Poly architecture and art and design students.

A pamphlet with information about the exhibition catalog, posters and cards will be available at the Performing Arts Center. For the latest information or to arrange private tours for groups and organizations, receptions or lectures during the exhibition, go to [www.sandralakeman.com](http://www.sandralakeman.com) on the Web.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For representative photos from the exhibition, contact Sandra Lakeman at (805) 541-3223 or [slakeman@calpoly.edu](mailto:slakeman@calpoly.edu).

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