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Ellyn Moller
508-588-9100, x2124
emoller@massasoit.mass.edu

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International Collection of Women's Labor Posters on Display in Akillian Gallery

In recognition of Women's History Month, a collection of international women's labor posters will be on display March 1-28 at Massasoit Community College's Akillian Gallery on the school's Canton campus. Through graphics and written word, the posters speak to issues and challenges like job discrimination, voting rights, full participation in the workforce and in unions, gender bias, and domestic violence. They also celebrate women and their mark on economic, political, and social achievements.

Posters for this exhibit were selected from the more than 8,000 labor and progressive political posters collected by Stephen Lewis of Malden. He is a long-time activist in the labor movement, and former treasurer of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Mr. Lewis has been collecting posters for the past 22 years at union and activist conferences, and from organizations, friends, and connections made through the internet. Posters hail from several countries including the US, Greece, Canada, The Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey, Pakistan, France, and Germany. "I didn't intend to start doing exhibits," said Lewis in a recent interview with Malden's Neighborhood View. "But, I realized they were piling up and no one was looking at them." Each poster he collected "meant something personal to him and he wanted to share them with the public."

As commercial advertising calls for more consumption, a poster can call for more action. Organizations in many countries used posters to communicate ideas and messages to their audience. Unions hang posters in the workplace to warn of dangers, educate about benefits or inspire actions. It is a communication tool that is used less frequently by unions in the United States. Some posters use mainly the written word to communicate a message. Others rely on creative art to communicate an idea. It is an art form that is easily accessible to many people. The art goes to the people rather than the people having to go to a museum.

Stephen has exhibited at a number of public libraries in Massachusetts, Boston City Hall, and two of the state Heritage parks. He has presented at the annual conference of the National Council on Public History, and on some cable television programs.

Stephen Lewis will be guest speaker on March 28, 12:00-2:00 at a reception in the Akillian Gallery, co-hosted with the Women's Resource Center at Massasoit Community College. Free event. Public invited. This project is supported in part by a grant from the Canton Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Massasoit Community College encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions related to access for this event, please contact 508-588-9100, ext. 2124 in advance of your participation or visit.

The Akillian Gallery is located at Massasoit Community College, 900 Randolph Street, Canton, MA. Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Restrictions may occur. Calling ahead recommended. 508-588-9100, ext. 2124. www.massasoit.edu/akilliangallery.

