

Slide show depicts U.S. poverty

Photographer captures life of less fortunate

By Wayne Parker
Emerald Contributor

A disturbing view of poverty and bigotry in rural America will be presented today in the documentary slide show, *American Pictures*, to be shown in the EMU Ballroom today at 3 p.m.

The show was created by Jacob Holdt, a Danish man who hitchhiked across the United States in the early 1970s taking thousands of pictures of the American underclass, especially in the deep South and in the ghettos of New York.

Senior Brian Hoop, who said he has seen the production three times, said *American Pictures* showed him a side of America he did not realize existed.

For instance, Hoop said he was appalled by the depiction of living conditions in a migrant worker camp, where workers lived in dirty shacks without running water.

"They were basically next to indentured servants," he said. "Their whole existence was working in the field."

Although the slides were taken almost 15 years ago, Holdt regularly updates the information in his narration, said Shannon Oliver, who has been helping to coordinate the showing. Holdt will be in Eugene today to narrate the showing himself.

A Eugene resident who appears in the documentary said that in many cases the living conditions depicted in *American Pictures* have deteriorated since the slides were taken.

"Whatever was going on in those places 10 to 15 years ago ... is worse now," said Marilyn Driscoll, who met Holdt in New York during his travels. She also appears in a



Courtesy photo

American Pictures, a slide show, features the photography of Jacob Holdt of Denmark.

book adapted from the slide show.

Holdt came to America because the racism and poverty intrigued him. "It was something he was interested in exploring," Driscoll explained. "It was unlike anything he had seen in Denmark."

Holdt, who will be in Eugene for today's showing, does not know Driscoll lives here, she said, adding she plans to surprise him when he arrives at the airport.

Although *American Pictures* has been showing around the country for more than a decade, today marks its first appearance at the University. The show has appeared at other Oregon schools, including Portland

State University, Oregon State University and Lewis and Clark College.

Some schools have made *American Pictures* an annual event. Dartmouth, Cornell and Boston University require freshman to view the production during orientation.

Today's showing, which falls on Americas Day during International Week, is sponsored by a coalition of student groups, including Student Campaign for Disarmament, International Student Association, Black Student Union, Students Against Apartheid and the ASUO Executive.

Admission to *American Pictures* is free.

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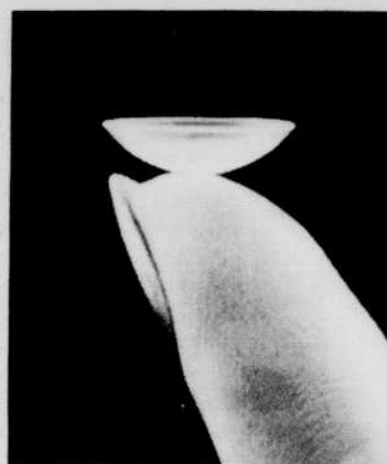


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