

For Immediate Release

March 5, 2003

Media contacts: Karen Simonian, 614 292-9923 or ksimonian@wexarts.org

Alison Wales, 614 688-3261 or awales@wexarts.org

**DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT GENTRIFICATION IN COLUMBUS
NEIGHBORHOOD TO PREMIERE AT WEXNER CENTER**

***FILM WILL BE INTRODUCED BY DIRECTORS; PANEL DISCUSSION WITH AREA
RESIDENTS AND PUBLIC RECEPTION ALSO PLANNED***

Flag Wars, a documentary film exploring the process of gentrification in a Columbus neighborhood, will have its Ohio premiere screening on **March 21 and 22** at the **Wexner Center**. Set in Columbus's historic Olde Towne East, the film explores what happens when white gays move into a black working-class neighborhood. The film, which received production support from the Wexner Center's Art & Technology residency program, will be introduced by the directors, **Linda Goode Bryant** and **Laura Poitras**, both nights. A public **reception** follows the March 21 screening, and a **panel discussion** will be held March 22.

Shot over four years, *Flag Wars* is a poignant account of competing economic interests between two historically oppressed groups seen through the politics and pain of gentrification. The setting could be anywhere: it is a city center with a formerly middle-class black community which is now economically depressed and being gentrified—in this case by white gay home-buyers interested in restoring the magnificent old homes. The black residents, working-class or poor and often elderly, fight to hold on to their homes and heritage. Realtors and gay home-buyers see the enormous, often run-down homes as fixer-uppers. The inevitable clashes expose prejudice and self-interest on both sides, as well as the common dream to have a home to call your own. Both provocative and elegiac, *Flag Wars* is a candid, unvarnished portrait of privilege, poverty, and local politics taking place across America.

A **panel discussion** will be held March 22 at 2 pm in the Wexner Center Film/Video Theater to explore the social costs and personal impact of gentrification. Moderated by local community activist, facilitator, and consultant Tom Dillard and including such residents from Olde Towne East as realtor Nina Masseria and Chief Baba Olugbala, as well as City Attorney (and former Franklin County judge) Richard Pfeiffer and others, this panel is designed as a brainstorming session. The audience is invited to discuss with panelists possible ways to reduce the adverse effects of urban development.

Flag Wars will premiere March 10 at the South by Southwest film, music, and interactive festival in Austin, Texas. It will air on PBS this summer as part of the 2003 *POV* series.

THE DIRECTORS

Directors Linda Goode Bryant and Laura Poitras have written, edited, produced, and directed many documentaries, video installations, and other films. Poitras has worked at HBO, IFC and BRAVO. Bryant, who grew up in Olde Towne East, is the founding director of Just Above Midtown, Inc., a New York City interdisciplinary artists' space that supports new work by emerging artists.

ART & TECHNOLOGY

Flag Wars was post-produced in the Wexner Center's Art & Technology facility, a state-of-the-art video and sound editing suite that supports artists' projects throughout the year. Designed primarily as a post-production facility in the creation of new video works, Art & Tech is equipped with digital editing technologies similar to those found in commercial facilities, and is a certified training site for AVID digital editing. The Art & Tech facility positions the Wexner Center as one of a handful of multidisciplinary arts centers worldwide possessing in-house technological resources to aid in the creation of new work. Last fall, the Wexner Center's media arts department, which includes Art & Tech, won the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture's "Outstanding Organization" Award, a prestigious award given biennially to a media arts organization.

EVENT SUPPORT

Flag Wars and the accompanying public programs are presented with support from the **Puffin Foundation** and the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation**.

Support for *Flag Wars* was provided by the Wexner Center's **Art & Technology** residency program, **WOSU**, **Independent Television Service**, **P.O.V.**, **National Black Programming Consortium**, **Ohio Arts Council**, **Jerome Foundation**, **New York State Council on the Arts**, and the **Ettinger Foundation**.

The 2002-03 film/video season is presented with support from the **Rohauer Collection Foundation** and the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation**. Visiting filmmaker presentations are presented with support from the **Ohio Arts Council**.

CALENDAR INFORMATION FOR FLAG WARS

Description: New documentary film about gentrification in Columbus's Olde Towne East, introduced by the directors.

Dates and times: Friday–Saturday, March 21–22 / 7 pm. Public reception follows March 21 screening. Panel discussion March 22 / 2 pm (free).

Running time: Approx. 90 mins.

Admission to film: \$5 general public, \$4 for members, students, senior citizens; \$2 for children under 12.

Location: Wexner Center Film/Video Theater, 1871 N. High St.

Public information: 614 292-3535 or wexarts.org/fv

WEXNER CENTER

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.