



CONJOINED: documentary photographs by **EVA RUSSO**



SCHOOL OF ART
Mason Hall Atrium Gallery
4400 University Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-993-8950

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Born on April 8, 2010, Maria and Teresa Tapia, nineteen month-old twins from the Dominican Republic, are beautiful, curious, and unique. Joined at the lower chest and abdomen, the girls were brought to the United States by the Richmond-based medical philanthropy, World Pediatric Project, for medical care. After much anxiety and preparation, the conjoined twins underwent an extensive surgery to separate them at the Children's Hospital of Richmond on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Beginning on the morning of November 7, and ending during the early morning hours of November 8, Maria and Teresa were successfully separated, and currently, are able to walk independently of one another. With new perspectives, yet still very emotionally attached to each other, the twins, who are both healthy and happy little girls, live with their parents and other siblings in the Dominican Republic.

Nominated for the Pulitzer Prize three times, Eva Russo, a staff photographer for The Richmond Times-Dispatch (RTD), was granted access to the twins and their family during the time leading up to the surgery and the post-operation period. She worked alongside RTD writer, Tammie Smith, to document the girls' journey through writing and still images. RTD published the photographs along with multiple stories chronicling the girls' recovery, which culminated in their eventual return home.

To complement the intimate still images and well-written articles, Russo also produced a short documentary for the general public. The purpose of the 14-minute video is to provide a deeper understanding of the mobility of Maria and Teresa as well as their interactions with their mother and aunt, their environment filled with "new" caregivers, and of course, the relationship between them leading up to the surgery.

APRIL 17 — MAY 11, 2012

OPENING RECEPTION: Wednesday, April 18, 2012 From 5:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m. @ Mason Hall

This Exhibition is Sponsored by School of Art, and African and African American Studies at George Mason University
Gallery Hours: 9:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m. www.soa.gmu.edu/gallery For more details: www.evarussophotography.com