

D A V I S
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High resolution images and interviews upon request

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**Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, presents
THE PERMANENT COLLECTION**

*The Artist-as-Curator: Kiki Smith and
Perceiving Space in Art*

On View Starting Feb 11

Wellesley, MA – The Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College is reinstalling its permanent collection galleries. Familiar works of art can be seen alongside rarely-seen objects starting February 11, 2009. New thematic galleries offer diverse ways of engaging with works of art, and they offer a sea-change in the way this museum considers and presents its collection. Visitors are invited to discover this transformation and consider new possibilities for interpreting art, and the broader world, through a range of gallery contexts. The Opening Reception is March 11, 6-8pm. The public is invited.

As of February 11, four galleries in which the permanent collection is thematically presented will be open. Visitors will find on view two new installations, *The Artist-as-Curator: Kiki Smith* and *Perceiving Space in Art*, as well as two galleries that opened in 2007, *American Art* and *Stories, Ideals, Beliefs*.

These reinstalled galleries create an interdisciplinary interface between the Davis Museum collection and teaching and learning at the campus. This presentation enhances the museum's role as a resource for creative learning and the development of visual

literacy. The museum is pleased to open the collection to new possibilities for direct engagement with works of art and for teaching across disciplines.

The Artist-as-Curator: Kiki Smith

Curated from the Davis Museum collection by internationally recognized artist Kiki Smith, this gallery integrates dozens of vessels from a wide range of cultures and periods into an installation of her design. Smith also selected a single painting – a spectacular 18th – century Mexican ex-voto depicting a woman enduring a mastectomy – for a key location in the gallery. Fragmented reproductions of the painting are dispersed throughout the installation, which she entitled *Cut from Her Breast*. Smith's presentation of these works of art is a departure from the typical aesthetics of a museum display. By inviting artists to curate selections from the collection, the Davis Museum hopes to expand upon the ways in which works of art are experienced and interpreted.

Smith's artistic production engages a wide range of media from installation to sculpture, printmaking, and photography. Based in New York City since the mid-1970s, she has exhibited widely and is represented in collections throughout the world. As museums increasingly question the ways in which the display of objects encodes and constructs meaning, Smith has joined a growing number of artists sought after as curators. She has organized exhibitions at the CUE Art Foundation, the International Print Center New York, the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

Perceiving Space in Art

Perceiving Space in Art is an inquiry into the depiction and perception of space in art. Artists construct meaning through the ways they organize space, pictorially or physically, and their choices influence our experience as viewers. This gallery brings together art in the Davis Museum collection from across eras and cultures, from a 19th -century cityscape to color field painting, and from a 16th -century Italian sculpture to a 20th - century Dan Flavin light installation. It asks viewers to consider how space is conceptualized in a range of media, including painting, sculpture, video, performance art,

and music. One area of the gallery, called *Sight and Sound*, will feature a new musical composition that explores acoustic concepts of space by composers Peter Gilbert and Karola Obermüller, both Visiting Professors, Department of Music, Wellesley College.

Key examples of video art supplement the Davis collection in this part of the reinstallation. Bruce Nauman's video, *Bouncing in the Corner No. 2*, and a series of films by Gordon Matta-Clark highlight the cultural and social constructs of our architectural environs.

By paying attention to the spatial aspects of these works of art from across eras and cultures, the museum hopes audiences will become more aware of how experiencing art is also an act of perceiving—perceiving not only our relationship to art, but also our place in the broader world.

The reinstallation of these galleries has been funded by The J. Paul Getty Trust, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Wellesley College Friends of Art, Davis Museum Program Endowment, and a gift from Jeannette Donovan in memory of her daughter Jean Donovan '76.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

Lecture on the “Ciwara” Tradition of Mali by Stephen Wooten

Fri April 17
12:30pm

Stephen Wooten, Assistant Professor, International Studies Program and Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, will lecture on more than a decade of his research on the famous "ciwara" tradition among the Bamana of central Mali. His talk will address the dynamic intersection between various forms of art: sculpture, performance and agriculture. The lecture will culminate in a visit to the newly installed permanent collection gallery, *Perceiving Space in Art*, to discuss the Davis Museum's example of a Bamana headdress.

This talk is held in conjunction with the course: *Secrecy in African Art: Hidden Knowledge, Palpable Form*, taught by Genevieve Hyacinthe, Adjunct Instructor Art Department, and Adjunct Curator, Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College. Open to All.

DAVIS MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER HOURS AND INFORMATION

Public Tours: Wednesday 1pm; Sundays 2pm led by museum docents. Free.

Museum Hours: Visit www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu

Location: Wellesley College, 106 Central Street in Wellesley, Massachusetts 02481

Parking: Free and available in the lot behind the museum. Additional parking is available in the Davis Parking Garage.

Docent tour information: 781-283-3382.

Accessible: The museum, Collins Café and Collins Cinema are wheelchair accessible and wheelchairs are available for use in the Museum without charge. Special needs may be accommodated by contacting the Director of Disability Services, Jim Wice at 781-283-2434 or at jwice@wellesley.edu.

FREE. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.