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DAVIS MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER PRESENTS
FIRST NEW ENGLAND EXHIBITION OF
GROUNDBEAKING BRITISH VIDEO/FILMMAKER STEVE MCQUEEN

March 18–June 29, 2004

(PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN OPENING DATE!)

Wellesley, MA – Three video installations by filmmaker and video installation artist **Steve McQueen**, open **Thursday, March 18** at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA. A recipient of England's prestigious *Turner Prize* (1999), awarded by the Tate in London, and of the major British award *OBE – Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire* (2002), McQueen's work is included in public and private collections worldwide. In the artist's first one-person exhibition in New England, McQueen's works' *Exodus* (1992-97), the triptych *Drumroll* (1998) — for which he received the Turner Prize— and *Prey* (1999), will be on view. An opening reception will be held at 6pm on Thursday, March 18, with a conversation between the artist and curator Anja Chávez at 7pm. The reception and discussion are free and open to the public. **Please note new opening date for exhibition.**

The British-born, Amsterdam-based McQueen (*1969) is one of the leading young international contemporary video installation artists and filmmakers. Trained in England (Goldsmiths College, London, 1990-93) and in the United States (Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, 1993-94) he has been widely exhibited in Europe, and in South America (ARC/Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France, 2003; Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo in São Paulo, Brazil, 2001; Documenta X, Kassel, Germany, 1997), but less so in the United States where his work has been presented in one-person exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago (2002) and at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1998).

McQueen's earlier black-and-white silent films draw upon structural filmmaking of the 1960s as well as on performance art to create aesthetically and intellectually compelling works that are rich in cinematic tradition. Most recently in his color video projections, he has focused on historic events in Grenada (*Caribs' Leap*, 2002), from where his family originates, and on an interdisciplinary approach between art and science when using existing images from *Voyager* (1977) and collaborating with scientists from NASA and SETI for *Once Upon a Time* (2003), his most recent site-specific work, commissioned by the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. London's Imperial War Museum commissioned McQueen to visit Iraq in 2003 to produce a work in response to the war.

McQueen's room-sized projected video installations immerse the viewer in a cinematic experience. His works, in which he often appears, are characterized by a visual minimalism and formal elements of the film such as framing, the point of view, camera movement, speed, sound and lighting. In an interview with Gerald Matt from March 7, 2001, Steve McQueen explained:

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around which the film will spin. In *Drumroll*, for example, the central idea was that three cameras would be rolling through New York City inside some oil drums. This was the best way for me to document a very specific urban situation. Everything was filmed. People in the street, I myself. Everything was perfect, I could do no wrong. I felt almost like a musician. All I had to do was to keep this oil drum roll almost like keeping a beat. The chaos that was recorded of people, cars, trucks, etc. was almost like improvisation. Everything that slipped into frame was permitted, it was impossible to make a 'mistake', everything is allowed."

Filmed in New York City, *Drumroll* (22 min., 4 sec., 1998; color-video projection with sound) beautifully combines the artist's interest in performance art, improvisation, music, the tradition of film and the cinematic experience. Three cameras mounted inside of a barrel offer spinning views of New York City as the artist pushes the barrel along the streets and sidewalks of Manhattan. The viewer listens to the cacophony of the city interrupted occasionally by the voice of the artist.

Prey (6 min., 25 sec., 1999; 16 mm color film with sound, transferred to video), in which the artist also appears, starts with the image of a tape recorder turned on and lying in the grass. Slowly, it is lifted into the air by a balloon, until it almost disappears from view. All along, the viewer hears a recording of rhythmic tap dancing that suggests a coded message and evokes the feeling that the viewer is the prey.

Exodus (1min., 5 sec, 1992-97; Super 8 film transferred to DVD) playfully refers to the Old Testament and to Bob Marley's eponymous reggae song. In the film, two elegantly dressed men walk along urban London's Brick Lane carrying potted palms that appear to be sprouting from their heads. When they disappear in the crowd only the moving palms are visible. Finally, they take off the palms, laugh, wave goodbye to the camera, and catch a bus.

Davis Museum Curator of Contemporary Art Anja Chávez organized the exhibition.

MEDIA NOTE: For more information, digital images, or to set up an interview, please contact Nina J. Berger at 617.283.2034 or ninajberger@hotmail.com or Anja Chávez, Curator of Contemporary Art, at 781.283.2065 or achavez@wellesley.edu .

PUBLIC PROGRAMS / STEVE MCQUEEN

March 18, Thurs, 6 pm OPENING RECEPTION

The opening of this leading film/video artist's first one-person exhibition in New England promises to be a major highlight of the Boston spring arts season, and a rare opportunity to meet McQueen during his residency at the Davis.

March 18, Thurs, 7 pm CONVERSATION

Steve McQueen, filmmaker and video installation artist, in discussion with Anja Chávez, Curator of Contemporary Art.

March 27, Sat, 12 noon – 2 pm LUNCH WITH A CURATOR

Curator Anja Chávez provides an introduction to the work of Steve McQueen, while sharing a delicious meal that pays tribute to McQueen's family origins in Grenada.

March 29, Mon, 11:10 am OPEN CLASS: Steve McQueen and the Urban Imagination

Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow Elisabeth Ford and her students discuss McQueen's experiments with documenting the "very specific urban situation" of New York City as it relates to the urban narratives of contemporary American fiction.

April 7, Wed, 2:15–4:45 pm OPEN CLASS: Steve McQueen and Installation Art

Asst. Prof. Jessica Irish and her students explore the art making process in McQueen's installation.

(more)

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April 8, Thurs, 1:30 pm OPEN CLASS: Images of Women and Blacks in American Cinema: Cultural Identity and the Cinematic Tradition

Prof. Pash Obeng and his students discuss interdisciplinary themes of cultural identity in McQueen's installation.

April 15, Thurs, 7 pm SPECIAL EXHIBITION DISCUSSION

Bo Smith, Katherine Stone White Head of Film and Video, Head of Concerts, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston discusses Steve McQueen's works in the context of experimental artists films from the 1970s with Jean Fisher, Ph.D., Reader in Art and Transcultural Studies, Middlesex University and Lecturer at the Royal College of Art, London, U.K.

May 4, Tues, 11:10 am OPEN CLASS: Steve McQueen and Contemporary Installation Art

Prof. Patricia Berman and her students explore McQueen's installations in light of recent developments in contemporary art.

Open Class Sessions are interdisciplinary classes taught by Wellesley College faculty are held in the museum galleries using works of art as visual resource materials. These sessions offer free educational opportunities for lifelong learning. Free and open to the public, no registration is required. Classes run for 60-70 minutes, unless otherwise noted.

Davis Museum and Cultural Center Hours & General Information

The Davis Museum is open Tues–Sat, 11-5pm, Wed eve until 8pm, and Sun 12noon to 4pm, from February 2 to May 9, and Tues to Sun noon – 4pm from May 10 to August 31. The Museum is closed Mondays and holidays, including July 3-6. Admission and parking are free.

Recorded information about Museum exhibitions, events, and driving directions is available at 781-283-2051 or online at www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu. For tour information, please call 781-283-3382.

The Museum's Collins Café, recognized for its innovative cuisine, offers a fresh menu daily and is open weekdays 8:30-3:30pm. 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.

