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**TWO CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED AMERICAN MUSEUMS SELECTED AS FIRST U.S. CURATORIAL TEAM TO EXHIBIT AT HAVANA BIENNIAL**

***Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and Spelman College Museum of Fine Art Reprise Groundbreaking Video Art Exhibition***

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Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, *sometimes I answer* (still), 2005. Digital photo animation, color, on two monitors. 1:36 minute loop. Courtesy the artist

HOUSTON, TX (February 16, 2012)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art have been selected to present the exhibition, *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded: Black Women Artists and the Moving Image Since 1970*, at the 11th Havana Biennial from May 11 – June 11, 2012, in Cuba. In 2008, the critically acclaimed exhibition was nominated for an Association of International Art Critic’s award in digital media and video.

“This exhibition will mark the first presentation of a curatorial team from the United States included as a participant in the main program of the Biennial,” said Biennial director Jorge Fernández. The inclusion of *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded 2.0* also marks the first time that Spelman College Museum of Fine Art and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston have been invited to create projects for an international biennial exhibition. *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded* offers an unprecedented opportunity to present works by several artists who have not exhibited their work in Cuba – two of the selected artists have presented in Cuba. With its focus on Black women and their diverse use of the enduring and contemporary medium of video art, *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded* encapsulates the theme of this year’s Biennial, “Artistic Practices and Social Imaginaries.” According to the Biennial’s curatorial team, the overarching theme of the event will focus on the “assessment of the behavior of the relationship between visual productions and the social imaginary.”

The Havana Biennial is one of the longest running biennials with a concentration on art from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia as well as a wealth of projects by Cuban artists. The goal of this year’s Biennial is to “bring art to all.” Projects will be mounted throughout the city in parks, city squares, art organizations, and within experimental venues.

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“We value this unprecedented opportunity to participate in the rich cultural dialogue that the 11th Havana Biennial affords,” said Andrea Brownlee, director of Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, who co-curated the exhibition in 2007 with Valerie Cassel Oliver, senior curator at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. “From its very inception, an exhibition about Black women artists working in video was groundbreaking. These women are often omitted from exhibitions about this medium. Likewise, they are rarely the focus of solo exhibitions on the subject. And now, presented within the legacy of the Havana Biennial, *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded 2.0* promises to exemplify the varied and provocative works that they continue to create.”

In its original iteration, *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded* included 48 works by 44 artists. The exhibition is the first to examine works by two generations of Black women artists working in film and video residing throughout the African Diaspora. It has been reconfigured for presentation at the Biennial to accommodate space constraints and will feature eight works by eight artists. *Cinema Remixed and Reloaded 2.0* will include works by emerging, midcareer, and established artists, and maintains the essence of the project’s generational and geographic diversity. The artists included are Maren Hassinger, the collaborative artist team Bradley McCallum and Jacqueline Tarry, Tracey Rose, Berni Searle, Lorna Simpson, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Kara Walker, and Carrie Mae Weems.

“*Cinema Remixed & Reloaded 2.0* is based in part on the belief that social imaginaries and art practices are often strengthened by a collective and communal drive to expand the understanding and acceptance of the totality of our histories and their imprint in the social, political, and cultural landscape,” explained Cassel Oliver. “This project proposes that Black women video artists are highly attuned to the broad concept of social imaginaries and for this reason often create works that are steeped in collective histories and social critique. The selected works underscore the reality that such social constructs have the potential to illicit swift and significant reactions.”

The principal objective of *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded 2.0* is to consider the eight selected video works within the framework of the “bonds between groups, their shared common interests and legitimacies.”

The concept for the project was conceived during a recent Spelman College-sponsored trip to Cuba that was coordinated in part by internationally recognized Cuban artist María Magdalena Campos-Pons. Brownlee met Jorge Fernández who then invited her to submit a proposal to the 11th Havana Biennial Committee.

To learn more about the museums, visit Spelman College Museum of Fine Art at [www.spelmanmuseum.org](http://www.spelmanmuseum.org) and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston at [www.camh.org](http://www.camh.org).

The official web site for the Havana Biennial is [www.bienalhabana.cult.cu/](http://www.bienalhabana.cult.cu/).

#### **ABOUT THE CURATORS**

**Andrea Barnwell Brownlee**, an art historian, curator, writer, and critic, has been the director of the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art since 2001. She has curated several highly regarded exhibitions that have received critical and popular acclaim including *iona rozeal brown: a<sup>3</sup> . . . black on both sides* (2004), *María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Dreaming of an Island* (2008), *Undercover: Performing and Transforming Black Female Identities* (2009), and *IngridMwangiRobertHutter: Constant Triumph* (2011). Brownlee is the recipient of numerous academic, professional, and scholarly awards including a MacArthur Curatorial Fellowship in the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Art Institute of Chicago (1998 - 2000), a Future Women Leadership Award from ArtTable (2005), and the President’s Award from the Women’s Caucus for Art (2005). In 2010, she was awarded an inaugural Nexus Award from the Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center. Brownlee, an alumna of Spelman College, earned her Ph.D. in Art History from Duke University in 2001. She is a member of the class of 2003 of the Getty Leadership Institute and has served on many boards including the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund and the Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences and was also the vice chair for the City of Atlanta Arts Funding Task Force.

**Valerie Cassel Oliver**, an internationally recognized, invigorating, and visionary curator who has orchestrated groundbreaking exhibitions, is senior curator of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. She was previously director of the Visiting Artist Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1996-2000) and a program specialist at the National Endowment for the Arts (1988-1995). In 1999, she co-organized the 2000 Biennial for

the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Cassel Oliver has curated numerous major exhibitions including *Splat Boom Pow! The Influence of Cartoons in Contemporary Art* (2003); *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970* (2005); *Black Light/White Noise: Sound and Light in Contemporary Art* (2007); *Hand+Made: The Performative Impulse in Art and Craft* (2010); *Benjamin Patterson: Born In the State of FLUX/us* (2010/11), the first major retrospective for Patterson; and *Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein*, the first major survey of the New York-based painter and activist. Cassel Oliver received her B.S. from The University of Texas at Austin and an M.A. in Art History from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and she holds a certificate of Executive Management from Columbia University. She was among ten fellows selected for the 2009 class for the Center for Curatorial Leadership in New York. In 2011 she was awarded the prestigious David C. Driskell Prize by the High Museum of Art for her significant contributions to African American and contemporary art history.

#### **ABOUT THE SPELMAN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF FINE ART**

The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art is the only museum in the nation that emphasizes art by and about women of the African Diaspora. Since it was established in 1996 it has established an impressive track record for organizing first-rate, mission-specific contemporary art exhibitions that have garnered critical and popular attention and has expanded the contemporary art offerings in Atlanta and the region.

#### **ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM HOUSTON**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is a leading destination to experience innovative art. CAMH actively encourages public engagement with its exhibitions through its educational programs, publications, and online presence. Always Fresh, Always Free.

#### **CAMH EXHIBITION FUNDING AND SUPPORT**

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