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**ALWAYS FRESH  
ALWAYS FREE**

**The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is pleased to present the first museum survey of work by New York-based artist Donald Moffett.**

*Donald Moffett:*  
*The Extravagant Vein*  
October 1, 2011 – January 8, 2012

Opening Reception  
Friday, September 30, 2011  
6-7PM: Members' Preview  
7-9PM: Public Reception

HOUSTON, TX (August 18, 2011)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is pleased to present the first comprehensive survey of work by New York-based painter Donald Moffett. *Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein* will provide viewers with insight into the breadth of the artist's practice over the past twenty years. As a painter, Moffett extends the traditional two-dimensional frame by creating highly textured relief works in oil paint or sometimes turning monochrome surfaces into intricate illuminations by incorporating video projections. The subject matter of his paintings—from politics and history to landscape and nature—are poetic, provocative, and even at times humorous. *Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein* presents nine important bodies of work created over the last two decades, including painting, works on paper, photography, sound works, and Moffett's light-loop paintings (paintings that incorporate video projections onto their surfaces).

An astute and thoughtful painter, Moffett knows the power of the artist to critique the world at large. A founding member of Gran Fury, the artistic arm of the AIDS activist group ACT UP, Moffett has remained engaged with issues surrounding the presence of gays in historical and contemporary culture. And he is fearless in addressing issues that still resonate today, such as the rights of openly gay men and women to serve in the military (*Gays in the Military*, 1990-91).



Donald Moffett, *Lot 121909 (18/o)*, 2009. Oil on linen with wood panel support. 17 x 17 inches. Collection Mickey and Jeanne Klein, Austin



Donald Moffett, *Lot 051408 (X)*, 2008. Acrylic, polyvinyl acetate with rayon, and steel zipper on linen, wood stretcher. 54 x 44 inches. Private collection, New York

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The series *Gays in the Military* (1990-91) draws upon the artist's formal training and keen interest in graphic design. Appropriating found prints from American Civil War military books, Moffett re-introduces the still relevant issue with humorous double-entendres and tongue-in-cheek wit. The series is juxtaposed in this exhibition with the suite of drawings *Mr. Gay in the U.S.A.* (2001).

In 2001, the artist attended the murder trial of Ronald Edward Gay, who was later convicted of murder. Angered that his surname, Gay, had become synonymous with homosexuality, Gay walked into the Backstreet Cafe (a known gay bar) in Roanoke, Virginia on September 22, 2000 and pulled a 9-millimeter gun from his coat killing Danny Lee Overstreet and wounding six others. While drawing has not figured largely into Moffett's work, through simple lines Moffett not only chronicles the trial, but visually renders the narrative of a hate crime and the judicial process—the interior of a courtroom, the profile of an accused killer, the faces of his victims, the jurors' box, among others—creating a series of haunting images.

Moffett's work, however, is not dominated by frameworks of politics and power, though these issues remain vital foundations in his ongoing advocacy towards civil rights. This exhibition explores the artist's later preoccupation with the expansion of the language of painting through the use of non-traditional materials such as video projection on paintings, reflecting his long-standing investigation of light and its relationship with flat, static surfaces.

With works including the two series *What Barbara Jordan Wore* (2000-2002) and *D.C.* (2002-2004), as well as the sound work *Impeach* (2002), Moffett takes on the polemics of power. Inspired by the Watergate hearings and the eloquent speeches of Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, an African-American woman and the first to hold rank on the House Judiciary Committee, Moffett reframed the hearings, projecting images of Jordan onto the canvas. Through the integration of the moving image upon the canvas, the audience bears witness to the brilliant nuances of the congresswoman's political astuteness.

The use of the light loop initiated by this series reappears in three subsequent bodies of work, including *D.C.* (2002-2004). In this series, Moffett takes a formalist look into the architectural icons of political power and everyday life amidst the talismans of patriotism, history, and corruption. His only sound work, the installation *Impeach* (2002), includes audio

of John Lewis, House Representative and Democrat from Georgia. Using the timbre of his voice during an impassioned speech defending President Clinton during his impeachment hearings, Moffett's work builds into a crescendo that engulfs the viewer.

Also featured in this exhibition are the artist's signature abstract paintings that bear the simple title *Lot* (1995-present). These paintings—often created as highly textured, monochromatic or, more recently, crafted canvases complete with zippers and embroidered elements—not only challenge the definition of painting as two-dimensional forms, but also reinforce Moffett's rendering of light. Featured *Lot* paintings are drawn from a number of series created over the artist's career, including *Hippie Shit* (2005), *Fleisch* (2007), *Gutted* (2007-2008), and *Comfort Holes* (2009-2010).

In addition to the aforementioned works, on view is work from the exhibition's title series *The Extravagant Vein* (2003) and *Paintings from a Hole* (2004), which incorporate the moving image onto canvas; as well as works on paper, *Nom de Guerre* (1991); and the photographic work *Blue (NY)* (1997).

Widely respected in the national and international arts community, Moffett remains relatively under-recognized to the general public. Although he has exhibited in some of the most prestigious venues throughout the world, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, and the Centro Galego De Arte Contemporánea in Spain, the impact of his extraordinary body of work has been largely uninvestigated as a whole until now. *Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein* provides a unique opportunity to not only celebrate the prolific career of this artist over the past two decades but also his influence on the field of contemporary art. While this exhibition provides perspective on several important topics of our contemporary lives, it is, too, a meditation on the larger, universal issues of love, loss, alienation, and death.

*Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein* is curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver, Senior Curator, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. The exhibition will travel to The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY (February 18-June 3, 2012), and The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA (June 23-September 9, 2012).

## PUBLICATION

*Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein* is the first comprehensive monograph dedicated to the works of

this influential and prolific contemporary American artist. It chronicles the work created by Moffett over the last two decades, surveying nine bodies of work that combine painting with nontraditional materials, video, and photography, and includes an exhibition checklist, color reproductions of the works, biography and bibliography. The monograph includes texts by Valerie Cassel Oliver, Senior Curator, and Bill Arning, Director, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; Russell Ferguson, chair of the department of art, UCLA, and Adjunct Curator at the Hammer Museum of Art; and an interview with Douglas Crimp, Fanny Knapp Allen Professor of Art History at the University of Rochester. The publication is designed by Miko McGinty and published by Skira Rizzoli, an imprint of Rizzoli New York.

*CAMH's Major Exhibition catalogues are made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.*

#### **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

**All events are free and open to the public, and take place at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston unless otherwise noted. For complete listings and current information, please check [www.camh.org](http://www.camh.org).**

#### **Opening Reception:**

#### **Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein**

**Friday, September 30**

#### **6-7PM: Members' Preview**

CAMH Membership has its benefits! Get a first look at the exhibition with the artist **Donald Moffett** and the show's curator **Valerie Cassel Oliver**, Senior Curator at CAMH.

#### **7-9 PM: Public Reception**

Help us celebrate the opening of the first museum survey of the work of New York-based artist Donald Moffett. Reception with bar and food truck; cash only please.

#### **Artists/Scholars Talk: Donald Moffett**

**Saturday, October 1, 2PM**

Join New York-based artist Donald Moffett for a gallery walk-through of his exhibition *Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein*, which presents nine important bodies of work created over the last two decades.

#### **Artists/Scholars Talk: Douglas Crimp**

**Saturday, November 5, 2PM**

Join us for a walk-through of the exhibition with **Douglas Crimp**, the Fanny Knapp Allen Professor of Art History at the University of Rochester. Crimp's interview with the artist appears in the exhibition's

catalogue, *Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein*.

#### **Musiqá Loft Concert**

**Thursday, November 17, 6:30PM**

Join us for the popular loft concert held by Musiqá, a nationally acclaimed contemporary music ensemble that takes a fresh look at the concert experience. Led by five composers, Musiqá creates programs that combine dance, poetry, theater, film, and visual arts with the finest modern repertoire. Cited by the *Houston Chronicle* as one of "five Lone Star classical musicians to make us proud," Musiqá will present a concert at CAMH inspired by the exhibition *Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein*.

#### **EXHIBITION SUPPORT**

*Donald Moffett: The Extravagant Vein* is supported by a generous grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Carol C. Ballard, Agnes Gund, Linda Pace Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support is provided by contributions from Anonymous, William F. Stern and Emily Leland Todd.

Exhibitions in the Brown Foundation Gallery at CAMH have been made possible by the patrons, benefactors and donors to the Museum's Major Exhibition Fund: Major Patron - Chinhui Juhn and Eddie Allen, Fayez Sarofim, and Michael Zilkha. Patrons - Louise D. Jamail, Mr. and Mrs. I. H. Kempner III, Ms. Louisa Stude Sarofim, and Leigh and Reggie Smith. Benefactors - Baker Botts L.L.P. / Anne and David Kirkland, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, Jackson Hicks / Jackson and Company, Marley Lott, Poppi Massey, Beverly and Howard Robinson, Andrew Schirrmeister, Susan Vaughan Foundation, Inc., and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Wilson. Donors - A Fare Extraordinaire, Anonymous, Anonymous, Bank of Texas, Bergner and Johnson Design, The Brown Foundation, Inc., Jereann Chaney, Susie and Sanford Criner, Elizabeth Howard Crowell, Sara Dodd-Spickelmier and Keith Spickelmier, Ruth Dreessen and Thomas Van Laan, Marita and J.B. Fairbanks, Jo and Jim Furr, Barbara and Michael Gamson, Brenda and William Goldberg / Bernstein Global Wealth Management, King & Spalding L.L.P., KPMG, LLP, Judy and Scott Nyquist, David I. Saperstein, Scurlock Foundation, and Karen and Harry Susman.

#### **EDUCATION SUPPORT**

The Museum receives support for its education programs from: Anonymous, Baker Hughes Foundation, Ruth Dreessen and Thomas Van Laan, Louise D. Jamail, John

P. McGovern Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. I.H. Kempner III, Kinder Morgan Foundation, Leticia Loya, Andrew R. McFarland, M.D. Anderson Foundation, Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment, Mrs. Louisa Stude Sarofim, Martha Claire Tompkins and 20K Group, LLC.

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### **GENERAL SUPPORT**

Funding for the Museum's operations through the Fund for the Future is made possible by generous grants from Chinhui Juhn and Eddie Allen, Anonymous, Elizabeth Howard Crowell, Barbara and Michael Gamson, Brenda and William Goldberg, Mr. and Mrs. I.H.Kempner III, Leticia Loya and Fayez Sarofim.

CAMH's operations and programs are made possible through the generosity of the Museum's trustees, patrons, members, and donors. CAMH receives partial operating support from the Houston Endowment, the City of Houston through the Houston Museum District Association, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and The Wortham Foundation, Inc.

United is the official airline of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

### **CAMH MISSION**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is an idea and a place shaped by the present moment. The Museum exemplifies the dynamic relationship between contemporary art and contemporary society through its exhibitions, public and educational programs, and publications. The CAMH provides the physical and intellectual framework essential to the presentation, interpretation, and advancement of contemporary art; it is a vibrant forum for artists and all audiences, and for critical, scholarly, and public discourse.

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Hours are Wednesday 11AM-7PM, Thursday 11AM-9PM, Friday 11AM-7PM, Saturday and Sunday 11AM-6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit [www.camh.org](http://www.camh.org) or call 713 284 8250.