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Curators at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston recognized for excellence

Houston, TX—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is pleased to announce that Toby Kamps, senior curator, and Valerie Cassel Oliver, curator, have been recognized separately for their curatorial achievements. Mr. Kamps' 2008 exhibition *The Old, Weird America* has received the prestigious award of "Best Thematic Museum Show Nationally" from the United States section of the International Art Critics Association (AICA/USA). Ms. Cassel Oliver is one of ten curators in the nation to have been chosen through a rigorous panel selection process to participate in the 2009 fellowship program of the Center for Curatorial Leadership (CCL), a distinguished organization that trains curators for leadership positions.

"The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston has a long history of encouraging a strong curatorial vision and these awards recognize that legacy. The Museum is committed to bringing challenging and interesting exhibitions to our local community and the greater art world, and we are fortunate to have on staff two such talented and dedicated curators," says Linda Shearer, interim director.

In addition, *Cinema Remixed and Reloaded: Black Women Artists and the Moving Image since 1970* was nominated by AICA/USA in the "digital media, video, or film" category. Co-organized by Ms. Cassel Oliver and Dr. Andrea Barnwell-Brownlee, director of the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, the exhibition featured the contributions of black women artists to the cinematic and visual arts arenas, and was presented in Atlanta in two parts (2007/2008) and at the CAMH (October 17, 2008-January 4, 2009). The AICA/USA awards ceremony will take place at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, March 2, 2009.

ABOUT AICA/USA

AICA/USA is the United States section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), founded in 1948/1949 in Paris. Each year AICA/USA invites its over 400 members to nominate and vote for the outstanding exhibitions of the previous year. AICA/USA, the nation's largest art critics organization, is the only group to formally recognize excellence in this cultural arena, and its Best Show awards are the art-world equivalent to those given by the New York Film Critics Circle or the Drama Desk.

ABOUT CCL

The mandate of the Center for Curatorial Leadership is to identify individuals within the curatorial ranks who have the potential to become leaders, and to help them shape themselves into curators who not only take charge of the art in their care, but who are also capable of assuming the leadership responsibilities essential to directing a museum. Fellowships are awarded to applicants selected by a panel of leading museum directors. The six-month program includes a two-week intensive program at Columbia University in New York and a one-week residency at a museum different from the curator's home institution.

ABOUT *THE OLD, WEIRD AMERICA*

The Old, Weird America is the first museum exhibition to explore the widespread resurgence of folk imagery and mythic history in recent art from the United States. *The Old, Weird America* illustrates the relevance and appeal of folklore to contemporary artists, as well as the genre's power to illuminate ingrained cultural forces and overlooked histories. The exhibition borrows its inspiration and title—with the author's blessing—from music and cultural critic Greil Marcus' 1997 book of the same title examining the influence of folk music on Bob Dylan and The Band's seminal album, *The Basement Tapes*.

On view at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston from May 10-July 20, 2008, *The Old, Weird America* will travel to the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA, June 6-September 7, 2009, and the Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA, October 3, 2009-January 3, 2010.

EXHIBITION FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The Old, Weird America has been made possible by generous support from the Union Pacific Foundation and Nina and Michael Zilkha. This exhibition has been supported by the patrons, benefactors, and donors to the Museum's Major Exhibition Fund: Major Patron-- Fayez Sarofim. Patrons-- Chinhui Juhn and Eddie Allen; Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Ballard; Mr. and Mrs. I. H. Kempner III; Ms. Louisa Stude Sarofim; Leigh and Reggie Smith; and Michael Zilkha. Benefactors-- Marita and J.B. Fairbanks; George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation; Jackson Hicks / Jackson and Company; Elizabeth Howard; King & Spalding L.L.P.; Elisa J. Stude; and The Susan Vaughan Foundation, Inc. Donors-- Baker Botts, LLP; Bergner and Johnson Design; Jana and Richard Fant; Julia and Russell Frankel; Mr. and Mrs. William Goldberg / Bernstein Global Wealth Management; Karol Kreymer and Robert J. Card, M.D.; Judy and Scott Nyquist David I. Saperstein; Karen and Harry Susman; Mark Wawro and Melanie Gray; and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Wilson.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition is made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.

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.

ALWAYS FRESH, ALWAYS FREE

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 Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Thursdays to 9:00 PM, and Sundays noon to 5:00 PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit www.camh.org or call (713) 284-8250.

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