

**CENTER STAGE: *PERFORMANCE/ART* COMMEMORATES DEBUT OF
DALLAS'S NEW AT&T PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
IN THE WORK OF SIX INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS**

-- *Contemporary Painting, Sculpture, Installation and Video by Artists Including Eija-Liisa Ahtila, David Altmejd, Frances Bagley and Tom Orr, Guillermo Kuitca, and Yinka Shonibare, MBE* --

DALLAS, September 2, 2009 -- The work of six contemporary artists who have adapted elements and characteristics of theater, opera, and performance in their work will be featured in a new exhibition, *Performance/Art*, opening October 8. Along with the Dallas Museum of Art's companion exhibitions *All the World's a Stage: Celebrating Performance in the Visual Arts*, which opened on August 30, and *A Dream Come True: The Dallas Arts District*, opening September 25, the DMA is set to honor and commemorate this fall's opening of Dallas's new AT&T Performing Arts Center and the completion of the Dallas Arts District.

Encompassing painting, sculpture, video, and installation, *Performance/Art* will present the work of Argentine painter Guillermo Kuitca, Canadian sculptor David Altmejd, Finnish video artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila, British-Nigerian sculptor and media and installation artist Yinka Shonibare, MBE, and the Dallas-based sculptors and installation artists Frances Bagley and Tom Orr.

"From Shonibare's ingenious reinterpretation of Verdi, to Kuitca's images exploring architecture of theaters and his Dallas Winspear Opera House curtain studies, to Bagley and Orr's commissioned installation, *Performance/Art* invites audiences to immerse themselves in dynamic works of art that take our ideas about the performing arts and then present us with an entirely new range of exciting sensory theatrical experiences," said Charles Wylie, The Lupe Murchison Curator of Contemporary Art at the Dallas Museum of Art, the exhibition's organizer.

The exhibition highlights include studies by Kuitca for his commission for the Winspear Opera House at Dallas's new AT&T Performing Arts Center, his first design for a stage curtain. Known for his psychologically penetrating paintings and drawings, Kuitca deconstructs theater seating charts and album covers to examine how architecture and imagery can be signs and symbols of the experience of theater and music.

In a separate gallery, Shonibare's video *Un ballo in maschera*, freely based on the Verdi opera of the same name, explores overlapping African and European cultural identities and gender roles through the lens of dance and opera. Shonibare's performers are dressed in 18th-century costumes fashioned from his signature colorful wax-print African cloth and enact a dazzling series of choreographed scenes based on the Verdi masterpiece.

Ahtila's haunting three-screen video *Talo/The House* will be installed much as a theater might look; although Ahtila's ingenious use of space allows her audience to become fully engaged with the sights and sounds of a completely unique environment. Set in a northern Finnish forest, the work includes an interior monologue similar to a theatrical soliloquy and follows a character who quietly and beguilingly narrates her increasingly tenuous grip on reality.

Performance/Art will also feature a new installation by Bagley and Orr commissioned especially for this exhibition. Based on their visually and thematically powerful sets and costumes for the 2006 Dallas Opera production of Verdi's *Nabucco*, this dramatic installation provides a tangible connection between the DMA and its new neighbor's history.

Finally, David Altmejd's mesmerizing sculpture *The Eye*, a deceptively symmetrical piece with mirror as its primary medium, will be on view. The artist created this spectacular work while thinking of John Adams' recent opera *Doctor Atomic*, about the creation of the atomic bomb, in which a grand architectural construction of mirrors flooded with light created a hypnotically and nearly overwhelming experiential environment suggesting any number of scientific and cosmological notions.

Performance/Art is organized by the Dallas Museum of Art and made possible by a grant from The Dallas Foundation through the Jean Baptiste "Tad" Adoue III Fund. Exhibition support is provided by American Airlines, by the Contemporary Art Fund through a bequest from the estate of Brooke Aldridge in honor of Cindy and Howard Rachofsky and through the gifts of an anonymous donor, Arlene and John Dayton, Laura and Walter Elcock, Amy and Vernon Faulconer, Kenny Goss and George Michael, Nancy and Tim Hanley, Marguerite Steed Hoffman, Suzanne and Patrick McGee, Allen and Kelli Questrom, Cindy and Howard Rachofsky, Deedie and Rusty Rose, Gayle and Paul Stoffel, and Sharon and Michael Young, and by the Donor Circle membership program through leadership gifts from Nancy and Clint Carlson, Amy and Vernon Faulconer, the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas, Ted and Shannon Skokos, and Donna M. Wilhelm.

About the Dallas Museum of Art

Located in the vibrant Arts District of downtown Dallas, Texas, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) ranks among the leading art institutions in the country and is distinguished by its innovative exhibitions and groundbreaking educational programs. At the heart of the Museum and its programs are its encyclopedic collections, which encompass more than 23,000 works and span 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Established in 1903, the Museum today welcomes more than 700,000 visitors annually and acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary readings and dramatic and dance presentations.

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