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Aug. 18, 2008

Media Web site: americanart.si.edu/press

Smithsonian American Art Museum Announces 2008 Nominees for Its Annual Contemporary Artist Award

The Smithsonian American Art Museum announced today (Aug. 18) the nominees for the museum's 2008 Lucelia Artist Award. The 15 nominees are Doug Aitken, Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, Slater Bradley, Matthew Buckingham, Mark Dion, Keith Edmier, Spencer Finch, Harrell Fletcher, Mark Grotjahn, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Rachel Harrison, Zoe Leonard, Suzanne McClelland, Wangechi Mutu and Dana Schutz. Nominated artists work in a diverse range of media including film, installation, mixed media, painting, photography, sculpture and video. The Lucelia Artist Award is part of the museum's ongoing commitment to contemporary art and artists through annual exhibitions, acquisitions, awards and public programs.

"For eight years the Smithsonian American Art Museum has had the wonderful opportunity, thanks in part to the annual Lucelia Artist Award, to engage in an exciting conversation with artists, curators, critics and scholars about the ever-changing state of the contemporary art community in the United States," said Elizabeth Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The Lucelia Artist Award, established in 2001, annually recognizes an American artist younger than 50 who has produced a significant body of work and consistently demonstrates exceptional creativity. Jurors nominate artists who will be recognized as one of the most important and influential artists of his or her time. The \$25,000 award is intended to encourage the artist's future development and experimentation. Previous winners were Jessica Stockholder (2007), Matthew Coolidge, director of the Center for Land Use Interpretation (2006); Andrea Zittel (2005); Kara Walker (2004); Rirkrit Tiravanija (2003); Liz Larner (2002); and Jorge Pardo (2001). Applications are not accepted for this award.

"The artists nominated this year continue to show a sustained commitment to distinctive work that challenges conventional thinking and expectations about the nature of art," said Joanna Marsh, The James Dicke Curator of Contemporary Art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Marsh is coordinating the jury panel selection and the nomination and jurying process. Five distinguished jurors, each with a wide knowledge of contemporary American art, were selected from across the United States. The panel nominated the artists and will determine the award winner in a day of discussion and review, remaining anonymous until the winner is announced in September. Past jurors have included John Baldessari, Klaus Biesenbach, Lynne Cooke, Richard Flood, Elizabeth Murray, Jerry Saltz, Rochelle Steiner, Nancy Spector and Robert Storr, among others.

About the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with approximately 41,500 artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. Its National Historic Landmark building, a dazzling showcase for American art and portraiture, is located at Eighth and F streets N.W. in the heart of a revitalized downtown arts district. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Metrorail station: Gallery Place/Chinatown (Red, Yellow and Green lines). Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Web site: americanart.si.edu.

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