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Kirk Savage Is Awarded the 22nd Annual Eldredge Prize for His Book about the National Mall and the Transformation of Memorial Spaces

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has awarded the 2010 Charles C. Eldredge Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in American Art to Kirk Savage for his book *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (University of California Press, 2009). It is recognized as a “beautifully written and cogently argued book that recounts the creation and re-creation of the memorial landscape of Washington, D.C., where generations of designers, engineers and artists have given concrete form to the imagined community of the nation.”

The three jurors who awarded the \$3,000 prize were Patricia Hills, professor of American art at Boston University; Margaretta M. Lovell, the Jay D. McEvoy Jr. Professor of the History of Art at the University of California, Berkeley; and Roberta K. Tarbell, visiting scholar at the Center for American Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

“Kirk Savage has written a compelling book about the history of one of the most important civic spaces in the United States that contributes an important perspective to the ongoing discussion of the role of the National Mall,” said Elizabeth Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The jurors wrote, “In part by design, in part by happenstance, the evolution of the Mall has been, Savage argues, a two-century tale of eloquent, shifting national self-definition. A relic-less site of civic pilgrimage, this public space with its monuments, vistas, urban forests and mass demonstrations, has proven a powerful battle ground of warring ideologies but also a site of national consensus-building. Anchored by accounts of the creation, reception and subsequent history of three very different monuments—the assertive Washington monument, the classicizing Lincoln Memorial and the minimalist Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as well as the abstract greensward they punctuate and define, Savage’s discussion is wide ranging and deeply nuanced.”

Savage is professor and department chair in the history of art and architecture at the University of Pittsburgh. He earned a doctorate degree from University of California, Berkeley in 1990. Savage

began writing about public monuments and public space in the United States when he was a freelance writer in the early 1980s. His 1997 book *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* won the John Hope Franklin Prize for best book published in American studies in 1998.

The Eldredge Prize, named in honor of the former director of the museum (1982-1988), is sponsored by the American Art Forum, a patrons' support organization. This annual award, initiated in 1989, seeks to recognize originality and thoroughness of research, excellence of writing and clarity of method. Single-author, book-length publications in the field of American art history appearing within the three previous calendar years are eligible. Dec. 1 is the deadline for 2011 nominations.

Recent Eldredge Prize recipients include Cécile Whiting (2009) for her book *Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s* (University of California Press, 2006) and JoAnne M. Mancini (2008) for *Pre-Modernism: Art-World Change and American Culture from the Civil War to the Armory Show* (Princeton University Press, 2005). A complete list of past winners is available on the museum's website at americanart.si.edu/research/awards/eldredge.

The museum's research programs include fellowships for pre- and postdoctoral scholars, extensive photographic collections documenting American art and artists, and unparalleled art research databases. An active publications program of books, catalogs and the journal *American Art* complements the museum's exhibitions and educational programs.

Eldredge Prize Lecture

On Wednesday, Dec. 1, at 4 p.m., Savage will present the annual Eldredge Prize lecture in the museum's Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium. A reception follows the event. The lecture and reception are free and open to the public.

About the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. Its National Historic Landmark building is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Follow the museum on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, ArtBabble, iTunes and YouTube. Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Website: americanart.si.edu.

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