



Shaun Gladwell / MATRIX 162

Artist's First Solo Museum Exhibition in the U.S. to Include Recent Video Works, One Newly Acquired by the Museum

HARTFORD, Conn., May 24, 2011— Artist Shaun Gladwell, who represented Australia in the 2009 Venice Biennale, will have his first solo museum exhibition in the United States at the Wadsworth Atheneum. The exhibition will feature five of Gladwell's recent video works, which use pop cultural references—from action movies to extreme sports and street performance—as their point of departure. His slow-motion videos feature characters—usually the artist himself—who perform extraordinary physical feats with skateboards, BMX bikes, surf boards, or even their own bodies, in settings such as the Australian outback or city streets. Part of the Wadsworth's ongoing MATRIX contemporary art series, the exhibition will be on view from June 2 through September 18, 2011.

“Shaun is inspired by the power of the human body. By using instantly recognizable imagery to set the scene and slowing down the film, he draws the viewers' focus to the figures and their movement, creating a hypnotic and meditative effect,” said Patricia Hickson, the museum's Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art. “This exhibition will bring together five video works with distinct and wide-ranging connections to art history and contemporary culture, introducing Shaun's works to an American audience for the first time in a museum setting.”

Gladwell is one of several recent MATRIX artists who draws on art history and pop culture in their work. Within the past year, MATRIX has featured artists Justin Lowe, whose site-specific installation for the Wadsworth was inspired by Surrealism and the New York punk rock scene, and Rashaad Newsome, whose works are constructed from hip-hop imagery and traditional coats of arms.

Gladwell's videos take pop cultural references and transform them into compelling works of art. A highlight of the exhibition is *Interceptor Surf Sequence* (2009), which was recently acquired by the museum. From Gladwell's “MADDESTMAXIMVS” series, which makes reference to the Australian post-apocalyptic action film series *Mad Max*, the work features a mysterious figure standing on top of a car that endlessly crawls along a dusty road in the outback. Also on view will be *Pacific Undertow Sequence (Bondi)* (2010), *Apologies 1 – 6* (2007-09), *Yokohama Linework* (2005), and *Centered Pataphysical Suite (Prosthetic Group)* (2009-11).

About MATRIX

The Wadsworth was the first to embrace the idea of contemporary art in an encyclopedic museum through its MATRIX program, which began in 1975 as a series of single-artist exhibitions that have showcased more than 160 artists, providing many with their first solo museum exhibition in the United States—including Janine Antoni, Dawoud Bey, Louise Lawler, and Adrian Piper. Many MATRIX artists, such as Christo, Willem de Kooning, Sol LeWitt, Gerhard Richter, Cindy Sherman, and Andy Warhol are now considered seminal figures in contemporary art.

“The new MATRIX series brings an exciting roster of emerging artists to the Wadsworth, and allows us to present work that is distinctive and new, yet still strongly influenced by the history of art,” said Susan Talbott, Director of the Wadsworth Atheneum. “As the series progresses I am excited to see how each artist [builds on the tradition of past MATRIX artists who have been inspired by the Wadsworth’s long history of engaging with contemporary art, dating back to the museum’s inception in the 1840s.](#)”

[About Shaun Gladwell](#)

Shaun Gladwell was born in 1972 in Sydney, Australia. He earned his BFA in 1996 from Sydney College of the Arts and an MFA in 2001 at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, in Sydney. He subsequently studied at Goldsmiths College in London. Gladwell has shown widely in Australia and Europe. The artist was selected as the featured artist in the Australian Pavilion at the 53rd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 2009. *Shaun Gladwell / MATRIX 162* will be this Australian artist’s first solo museum exhibition in the United States.

About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is located at 600 Main St. in Hartford, Connecticut. The Museum is open Wednesdays to Fridays, 11 am to 5 pm and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm. For more information, please visit www.wadsworthatheneum.org.

Contact:

Kimberly Reynolds
Director of Communications
860-838-4055
Kimberly.reynolds@wadsworthatheneum.org

Molly Kurzius
Resnicow Schroeder Associates
212-671-5163
mkurzius@resnicowschroeder.com

