



## **Video Exhibition Highlights Wadsworth's History Through its MATRIX Exhibition Series**

**HARTFORD, Conn, January 10, 2012** – The Wadsworth Atheneum presents *Three Histories: The Wadsworth According to MATRIX*, a video exhibition which addresses the museum's history from three distinct points of view. The videos were commissioned from artists Andrea Fraser, Christian Jankowski, and Catherine Sullivan for MATRIX, the museum's series of changing exhibitions featuring emerging contemporary artists.

On view now through March 4, 2012, *Three Histories* showcases three videos featured in three past MATRIX exhibitions: *Welcome to the Wadsworth: A Museum Tour* (1991), from Andrea Fraser / MATRIX 114; *The Matrix Effect* (2000), from Christian Jankowski / MATRIX 142; and *'Tis Pity She's a Fluxus Whore* (2003), from Catherine Sullivan / MATRIX 149.

Collectively, the three videos highlight important aspects of the Wadsworth Atheneum's history – its beginning and significance as the oldest consistently running public art museum in the country; its legendary and notorious Chick Austin years; and its establishment of the first contemporary art exhibition program within an encyclopedic museum with MATRIX.

Andrea Fraser personally conducted tours of the Wadsworth Atheneum on weekends in April 1991. For the live performance-tour and subsequent video work, Fraser studied the complex history of Hartford, its neighborhoods, and the museum. Fraser leads the viewer around the exterior of the museum buildings in an engaging and surprisingly critical analysis of biased practices associated with many cultural institutions.

Christian Jankowski tells the story of the MATRIX contemporary art exhibition series through the words of eight former MATRIX artists and founding curator Andrea Miller-Keller. Children act in the roles of the curator and artists and speak their words, culled from interviews for the script. The young actors stumble and change words that comically and insightfully add another dimension to the story. This work was created for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MATRIX program in 2000.

Catherine Sullivan often works between the mediums of video and performance. In this dual projection work, she re-imagines two very different historic, live performances that shared extreme, negative audience responses—the Wadsworth's production of the incest-themed play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*

(1943) and the riot-inducing Fluxus action performance art at the *Festival of New Art* (1964) at the Technical Academy's Audimax in Aachen, Germany. Celebrated Wadsworth director A. Everett "Chick" Austin, Jr., played a major role in the controversial production while contemporary artist Joseph Beuys participated in the Fluxus program. Sullivan filmed this new work on the actual sites of the original performances and used a single actor—Andrzej Krukowski—to play all the parts.

### **About MATRIX**

At its inception in 1975, the MATRIX series aimed to provide a showcase for the most recent trends in contemporary art in dialogue with the traditional art offerings of an encyclopedic art museum. Still relevant after thirty-six years, the MATRIX series' core mission remains the same: the innovative, museum-quality presentation of exceptional work by emerging artists from around the globe. The first series of its kind, MATRIX has inspired innumerable similar programs across the country and has developed a reputation for providing the first one-person museum show for many important artists.

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is located at 600 Main St., Hartford, Connecticut. The Museum is open Wednesdays to Fridays, 11 am – 5 pm and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am – 5 pm, and the first Thursday of every month 11 am – 8 pm. Please visit [wadsworthatheneum.org](http://wadsworthatheneum.org) for more information.

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