



Jan Tichy / MATRIX 164

Artist's Exhibition Features Site-Specific Installation Inspired by Wadsworth's History and Collections

Hartford, CT, April 4, 2012 –Chicago-based, Czech-Israeli artist Jan Tichy will be presented in MATRIX 164, on view at the Wadsworth Atheneum this spring. The exhibition will feature three installation works that relate to the city of Hartford and the museum's collections, including a new installation created for this exhibition inspired by the history and impact of former Wadsworth Atheneum director Chick Austin. Part of the museum's MATRIX series of contemporary art exhibitions, *Jan Tichy / MATRIX 164*, on view from April 5 – August 5, 2012, will include three separate but related room-sized installations.

Tichy's installations often combine a variety of media—sculpture, video, photography, architectural structures, and installation—to address his interests in art, architecture, and politics. In darkened spaces, slow-moving light projections travel irregularly across sculptural constructions evoking surveillance, the seen and unseen, and the visible and invisible.

"Tichy's nocturnal installations, animated with projected light, transform white-cube spaces into fantastical nightscapes that continually shift the viewer's perception," said Patricia Hickson, the museum's Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art. "Open for personal interpretation, while loaded with intricate layers of meaning, Jan Tichy's work holds subtle allusions to social and political issues that can be both pointed and wide-ranging. Offer Jan Tichy a darkened space and he'll evoke a personal experience of enlightenment."

The centerpiece of the exhibition, *Installation No. 14 (Austin)*, questions the museum itself through the legendary story of A. Everett "Chick" Austin (museum director from 1927 to 1944), a leader in bringing Modern and Baroque art to American audiences. Two additional installations in the exhibition similarly reflect upon the city of Hartford and the museum's founding collection of American landscape painting. Tichy worked with curators from the museum's different departments to discuss his concept and select the most appropriate works from their respective collections to convey his ideas in the installation. In a reference to the act of seeing, five pedestals hold a selection of European and American busts in a line along the far wall. Because they face the wall, away from the viewer, the experience suggests entering a theater from the rear, from which one sees rows of shoulders and the backs of heads. In addition to acknowledging Austin's innovative theater program, Tichy's unusual positioning of the busts proposes

viewing an artwork in a completely new way—a recognition of Austin’s approach to his work, his life, and his own art making.

Installation No. 6 (Tubes) resembles a dramatic city skyline at night with headlights moving through the streets and the audible hum of electricity and urban activity. The three-dimensional skyscrapers are composed of simple, vertical, white paper tubes of varying heights and widths adhered to the upturned surface of a large television monitor. The active lights generate from the monitor, illuminating the towers and filling the room with a reflected glow. The escalating buzzing sound moves from pleasant to disturbing, suggesting the dualities of a lively but complicated metropolis, like Hartford.

Relating to the museum’s Hudson River School collection, Tichy’s *Installation No. 11* considers the ever-changing landscape, whether the result of a natural disaster, devastation of war, accidental tragedy, or transformation over time. Two wall-sized projections face one another depicting an expansive sea and a vast desert with blowing sand, alternately coming into view and disappearing. On the wall between the projections, five ominous images of Horus—the Egyptian falcon-god—loom over the space, which is crisscrossed with angled lines of taut strings anchored at the ceiling and floor.

About Jan Tichy

Born in Prague, Jan Tichy (Czech, b. 1974) moved to Israel in the mid-1990s. After studying Political Science at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tichy studied photography at Musrara School of Photography in Jerusalem and Advanced Studies in Art at Bezalel Academy in Tel Aviv. In 2007 he moved to Chicago and earned MFA degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he now teaches. He has had one-person exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv; and the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. Tichy’s work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Indianapolis Museum of Art; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; and MoBY - Museum of Contemporary Art, Bat Yam.

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 among the most important figures in contemporary art today.

“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."

Upcoming MATRIX Artists:

Ahmed Alsoudani / MATRIX 165

September 6, 2012 – January 6, 2013

Alsoudani's tumultuous paintings imagine horrific scenes from war-torn countries, including Iraq. In fact, the artist grew up in that country during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) before fleeing to America in 1999. The chaotic images in Alsoudani's large-scale canvases reveal violence, devastation and carnage in wildly active compositions. In a technique using equal parts vibrantly-colored acrylic paint and expressive charcoal drawing, distorted figures and grotesque beasts emerge from surreal landscapes that communicate a universal understanding of human conflict and infinite suffering.

Deb Sokolow / MATRIX 166

February 7 – June 2, 2013

Based in drawing and storytelling, Sokolow takes a comic-book approach to her art as if pulling the pages out of a book and spreading the outrageous and complex stories across the walls of a gallery—some exceeding 50 feet in length. In directional drawings and text, she explores a variety of subjects—from a longstanding conspiracy theory surrounding the Denver International Airport, where she suggests a secret underground bunker was built for the New World Order Headquarters, to the possibility that the US Post Office outside the window of her Chicago studio doubles as a site for illegal drug trafficking. All of her paranoid tales are based in well-researched facts, which are expanded by the wild imagination of the narrator who implicates the viewer—"you"—in the stimulating drama.

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 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please visit www.wadsworthatheneum.org for more information.

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