



MEDIA CONTACTS:

Anne Mannix
amannix@artbma.org

Kelly Linton
klinton@artbma.org

Sarah Pedroni
spedroni@artbma.org

443-573-1870

CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES BRINGS INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED ARTISTS TO BMA

BALTIMORE, MD (January 10, 2007) — Eight internationally renowned artists acclaimed for their work in contemporary photography come to The Baltimore Museum of Art in March and April for a series of free public discussions about photography's changing role in contemporary art. **Conversations with Contemporary Photographers** brings together artists such as James Welling, Thomas Struth, and Jeff Wall, and invites the audience to join in the discussion. Events are held in the BMA's Meyerhoff Auditorium on **March 1, March 21, April 12, and April 26 at 7 p.m.** Admission is free.

Moderated by prominent art critic and Johns Hopkins University professor Michael Fried and BMA Senior Curator of Contemporary Art Darsie Alexander, this innovative program pairs artists for conversations that address the top issues in contemporary art today—from the relationship of photography to painting to the impact of digital technology on a medium once thought to be an objective documentation of reality. Several of the participating artists are represented in the BMA's collection of more than 3,000 photographs, and have been featured in recent exhibitions at the Museum.

Thursday, March 1 - 7 p.m. – Jeff Wall and Stephen Shore

Jeff Wall has exhibited internationally for 25 years and is widely considered to be one of the most influential and intriguing artists working today. He is best known for his light boxes, large-scale color transparencies that combine the seductive glow of a cinema screen with the physical presence of sculpture. A writer and historian, he imparts an intellectual rigor to work placed at the center of the most current art theory and debate.

Stephen Shore achieved recognition as a key figure in bringing serious consideration to color photography during the 1970s. During this period, he traveled across the U.S. documenting the street corners, diners, and motels of ordinary America. His indelible images have shaped conceptions of American popular culture while contributing to the fundamental themes of photography of today.



Jeff Wall, *Diagonal Composition No. 3*, 2000. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Collectors Circle Fund. BMA 2002.29. Courtesy of the artist.

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Wednesday, March 21 - 7 p.m. – Thomas Demand and James Welling

German artist **Thomas Demand**'s meticulously crafted images take their cues from historical sites and events, lending a strange familiarity to these otherwise artificial scenes. With representation in major museums across the globe, he was most recently the subject of a one-person exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Since the 1970s, **James Welling** has focused his attention on the perceptual and material aspects of the photograph, treating each new image as an experiment and investigation. His visually spare compositions challenge customary photographic subject matter by exposing the process itself as content. A professor of art at UCLA, he is the recipient of many distinguished awards and is represented in collections around the world. His work was featured in a major BMA exhibition in 2000.

Thursday, April 12 - 7 p.m. – Thomas Struth and Mitch Epstein

From his early black-and-white streetscapes to his recent mural-sized color views of primeval landscapes around the world, **Thomas Struth** has been a key figure in bringing photography into the mainstream of contemporary art, imbuing his medium with the scale and ambition of great art from the past. His most celebrated works are perhaps the *Museum* series, monumental color images of people visiting churches, museums, and other cultural destinations.

Photographer **Mitch Epstein** is an inveterate traveler, searching out sites that combine visual intrigue and psychological power. Widely published and exhibited, his work follows in the tradition of great street photographers, who find deeper meaning in seemingly random details of everyday life. More recent work has added a personal narrative to his ever-evolving oeuvre.

Thursday, April 26 - 7 p.m. – Anthony McCall and Tacita Dean

Experimental filmmaker **Anthony McCall's** dramatic 'solid light' projections transformed the possibilities of cinema in the 1970s, changing the viewer's experience from that of static bystander to active participant in the physical reality of film. A writer and historian whose career has spanned the analog-to-digital revolution, McCall is among the most noted and articulate speakers on the role of media today. McCall's film installation, *Line Describing a Cone*, was recently acquired by the BMA.

British artist **Tacita Dean** examines the detritus and residue of photographic history as it leaves its marks on old images, postcards, and books. Using found and often frayed sources, she creates new work that examines the relationship between the past and present. Dean was recently awarded the Hugo Boss Prize from the Guggenheim Museum in New York, where her work will be on view from February 23 to June 6, 2007. A resident of Berlin, she is also a highly regarded experimental filmmaker.

Moderator **Michael Fried**, currently the James R. Herbert Boone Professor of Humanities at The Johns Hopkins University, is a prominent art critic, historian, poet, and a scholar of broad interests and expertise. In the 1960s he was involved in a circle of art critics that included Clement Greenberg and published a critique of Minimalism considered one of the most important essays on 20th-century American art. Fried is also the

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author of books about 18th- and 19th-century painting and literature, a collection of criticism of contemporary art, and several volumes of poetry. In 2004, he received a Mellon Distinguished Achievement Award. He is currently working on a book dedicated to contemporary photography.

Moderator **Darsie Alexander**, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at The Baltimore Museum of Art, specializes in contemporary photography. Her work includes writing on posed photographs, representations of the body, and the role of documentation photographs in 1970s performance art. At the BMA she organized *SlideShow* (2005), the first major exhibition to focus on the evolution of slides, *Common/Places: Contemporary Photography from Germany and Northern Europe* (2002), and *Parallel Tracks: The History of Photography in Two Brief Installments* (2002). Prior to joining the BMA, she was Assistant Curator in the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, where she organized numerous other exhibitions.

Funding for this program is generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the BMA Friends of Modern and Contemporary Art. Additional support is provided by Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff and Alan and Carol Edelman.

ON VIEW

Front Room: Luisa Lambri

March 7–May 20, 2007

Free exhibition

Italian photographer Luisa Lambri infuses her images of domestic modernist architecture with beauty and pathos. Lambri is conducting a special project in Baltimore, photographing the interior and environs of a local 1950s house designed by architect Marcel Breuer.

The *Front Room* series is generously sponsored by Stiles Tuttle Colwill, Nancy Dorman, Katherine M. Hardiman, and Elaine and Solomon Snyder.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION

The BMA's photography collection has grown to more than 3,000 works of astonishing quality. The core of the collection is 20th-century American street photography, and an exceptional group of experimental European photographs made between the wars. Photographers represented in depth include William Eggleston, Robert Frank, Man Ray, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, and Edward Weston. The Museum has continued to expand the photography collection with acquisitions of works by Brassai, Imogen Cunningham, Gordon Parks, James Van der Zee, and James Welling.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free; special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m.- 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. -6 p.m.; and during the first Thursday of every month (except major holidays), 11 a.m. -8 p.m. The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31st Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit www.artbma.org.