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Press Release

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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, UNVEILS LINDE FAMILY WING FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

MFA Debuts Ellsworth Kelly Exhibition, Seven New Galleries, Lively Social Spaces, and Expanded Public Programming

BOSTON, MA (September 15, 2011)—Contemporary art will find a dynamic new home at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), when the Museum unveils the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art during a 24-hour celebration September 17 and 18. The wing includes seven new galleries that present innovative approaches to the exhibition of contemporary art within the context of the Museum's encyclopedic collections, offering new perspectives and encouraging connections between art of the present and past. More works of art are also on view in the Edward H. Linde Gallery, on Art Walls, and in the Henry and Lois Foster Gallery, where the exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: Wood Sculpture* debuts. Approximately 250 contemporary works in all media are displayed, including paintings, sculpture, photographs, works on paper, decorative arts, video, new media, and design. In addition, the contemporary wing will be a lively social space at the Museum—a destination for full engagement with contemporary culture in all its forms through art, music, performances, readings, lectures, courses, and artist demonstrations. It is named in recognition of the generosity of Museum benefactors Joyce Linde and her late husband, Edward Linde, and their family. To mark the opening of the wing, the Museum is hosting a 24-hour celebration beginning with ticketed parties on September 17 and culminating in a free Open House on September 18 at which the MFA will screen its new acquisition, Christian Marclay's 24-hour video, *The Clock*. The media sponsor for the opening celebration of the Linde Family Wing is *The Boston Globe*. The Opening Party is sponsored by Atlantic Trust.

More than 80,000 square feet, the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art is located in the west-facing I.M. Pei-designed building, which opened in 1981. Running the length of the wing is a barrel-vaulted skylight, which provides natural illumination throughout the building's two main levels. The renovation of the wing has more than tripled the exhibition space, resulting in more than 21,000 square feet.

"The opening of the Linde Family Wing is a transformative moment for contemporary art at the MFA," said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the Museum. "The new galleries will provide a welcoming gateway for visitors to experience the excitement of contemporary art, opening new doors for the discovery of our collections. As one of the world's greatest encyclopedic museums, the MFA can bridge past and present by placing contemporary art into a historical and global context. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the Linde family, longtime friends and supporters of the Museum, the MFA will be able to create a vibrant new environment for the enjoyment of contemporary art."

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With the unveiling of the new wing, the MFA premieres *Ellsworth Kelly: Wood Sculpture*, the first museum survey of wood sculptures by Kelly, an alumnus of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA). The exhibition, presented in the Henry and Lois Foster Gallery (4,700 square feet), showcases 19 of the 30 wood sculptures made by the renowned artist over his lifetime. Another space used for rotating exhibitions is the Edward H. Linde Gallery (approximately 3,900 square feet), which showcases works by internationally acclaimed SMFA alumni and annual presentations of the Community Arts Initiative project.

The Linde Family Wing's seven new collection galleries reflect the global nature of the Museum's collections, emphasizing that contemporary art extends a range of traditions, histories, and cultures. A great diversity of works is represented, including those by artists El Anatsui, Lynda Benglis, Mark Bradford, Kathy Butterly, Carlson/Strom, Cerith Wyn Evans, Mona Hatoum, Maurizio Nannucci, Wade Aaron, Jim Hodges, Eva Hild, Matthew Day Jackson, Jun Kaneko, Ellsworth Kelly, Josiah McElheny, Sigmar Polke, Ken Price, Doris Salcedo, Timorous Beasties, Anne Truitt, Kara Walker, Andy Warhol, Cindy Sherman, Fred Wilson, and Betty Woodman.

"The Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art is a milestone for the MFA. Acting as a crossroads for all contemporary collections and programming at the Museum, the wing will raise the prominence and vitality of our contemporary programs in distinctive and significant ways," said Edward Saywell, chair, Linde Family Wing and head of Contemporary Art and MFA Programs. "With a rich variety of installations, exhibitions, special programs, and community activities, the wing will be an inspiring place for all visitors to engage with today's art in an environment that is open and welcoming to all."

The transformation of gallery and public spaces in the wing was designed to allow the Museum's Department of Contemporary Art and MFA Programs to present the art of our times through fresh perspectives, and to create lively spaces for learning, socializing, dining, and shopping. The wing includes:

- Seven new collection galleries (Level 2)
- Henry and Lois Foster Gallery for special exhibitions (Level 1)
- Edward H. Linde Gallery for works by SMFA alumni and presentations of the Community Arts Initiative project (Level 1)
- Eunice and Julian Cohen Galleria, featuring the Hope and Mel Barkan Art Wall, the Lisbeth Tarlow and Stephen Kay Art Wall, and the Michael D. Wolk Art Wall, as well as additional Art Walls (Levels 1 and 2)
- John, Bertram A. and Ronald M. Druker Family Pavilion, including two new classrooms, new entry to the Mabel Louise Riley Seminar Room, and renovated Bookstore and Shop (Level 1)
- Remis Auditorium for lectures, courses, films, concerts, and presentations (Level 1)
- Three dining venues, including *Taste*, the new café and wine bar (Level 1); renovated *Bravo* restaurant (Level 2); and the *Garden Cafeteria* (Ground Level)
- Courtyard Gallery for student artists (Ground Level)

The seven new collection galleries (the area formerly occupied by the Museum's Gund Gallery for special exhibitions and the exhibition shop) total nearly 12,000 square feet. Anticipating questions visitors may have about contemporary art, these galleries are installed thematically, rather than by chronology or defined art movements. Installations invite dialogue about what is "contemporary art": How do artists push the boundaries of what we understand art can be? How is the work made and why?

How does the art of today relate to that of the past? Works drawn from the MFA's encyclopedic collections provide context and counterpoints within the contemporary installations, juxtaposing a great range of media in the seven galleries, named for generous donors to the MFA:

- Ives Family Gallery—*Art can be...*
- Catherine and Paul Bittenwieser Gallery—*What's it about?*
- Jeanne and Stokley Towles Gallery—*Quote? Copy? Update?*
- John F. Cogan, Jr. and Mary L. Cornille Gallery—*Familiar—Altered*
- Richard and Nancy Lubin Gallery—*How is it made?*
- Lizbeth and George Krupp Gallery—*Dynamic Duration* (Video and New Media)
- Daphne and Peter Farago Gallery—*Crafting Contemporary: Selections from The Daphne Farago Collection* (Decorative Arts)

"Fundamental to our vision for the new collection galleries is an emphasis on how contemporary art develops new meaning in our current moment *and* continues to be in dialogue with the art that came before," said Jen Mergel, the Museum's Robert L. Beal, Enid L. Beal and Bruce A. Beal Senior Curator of Contemporary Art. "Introducing the idea that '*all art has been contemporary*,' we hope to build curiosity, context and exchange about contemporary culture as an unended story in which we all actively participate to shape understanding. The galleries will become a resource for audiences to revisit again and again to engage with an art experience that is truly 'con tempos,' with the times."

Works also are displayed on Art Walls in the wing, which present key contemporary pieces and acquisitions and showcase thematic installations and special projects. On several Art Walls on Levels 1 and 2, the first thematic installation is "Sparking Dialogue," which introduces electric-lit text-based works to offer open-ended statements and prompt discussion about contemporary culture. Inspired by the scrolling LED sign by Jenny Holzer on Level 1 in the Eunice and Julian Cohen Galleria, this installation includes more than a dozen works by international artists. On Level 2 is featured a site-specific installation of Maurizio Nannucci's neon text, *All Art Has Been Contemporary* (1999/2011) on the Hope and Mel Barkan Art Wall, where works by Kader Attia, Tracey Emin, and Joseph Kosuth also are on view. Nearby is the newly created work by SMFA alumnus Wade Aaron, *Untitled (INTENT)* (2011–13), which spells out INTENT in a grid of incandescent light bulbs—timed to burn out one by one—a technology scheduled to be phased out in the near future that literally manifests the fading of intent. In addition, on the Michael D. Wolk Art Wall is Michael Phelan's neon piece, *Bless You Taco Bell* (2009). Works by the 2011 winner of the MFA's Maud Morgan Prize, Cambridge artist Wendy Jacob, are featured on the Lisbeth Tarlow and Stephen Kay Art Wall on Level 2. Included is an interactive artwork that allows visitors to experience sounds of the Antarctic through a vibrating floor (*Ice Floe*, 2011), and a series of photographs (*Explorers Club*, 2011) that document her two-year project mapping urban space according to the particular visual and spatial perspective of an autistic boy. Another Art Wall (Level 1) features *Mañana Man*, a major new piece by Kay Rosen created for the MFA, painted along the full length of the longest (120-foot) art wall. A second Art Wall showcases Jeppe Hein's neon work, *PLEASE...* (2008).

The renovation of the contemporary art wing has allowed for the creation of new education and social spaces. Opportunities to learn about and interact with art are offered in the John, Bertram A. and Ronald M. Druker Family Pavilion, which includes two

new classrooms (totaling 2,100 square feet), a new entry to the Mabel Louise Riley Seminar Room, and the renovated Bookstore and Shop. Other public programs, such as films, lectures, and concerts, take place in the 380-seat Remis Auditorium, which is the venue for the MFA's Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Celebrity Lectures series, and the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Film Program. Additionally, visitors can socialize, grab a bite, and relax in *Taste*, the new café and wine bar featuring bar seating as well as comfortable lounge chairs grouped around coffee tables. They can also enjoy the wing's two other dining venues—the completely renovated *Bravo* restaurant, which now has a more modern aesthetic reflected in its new décor, and the existing *Garden Cafeteria*.

Other major enhancements in the Linde Family Wing include the increased elevation of the gallery ceilings, many now almost 18 feet high to accommodate larger works of art; new oak flooring; replacement of the escalator with a new, grand staircase; and renovated restrooms. Additionally, the wing's entrance has been transformed into the school and community group entry through which the more than 100,000 students and community group participants who visit the MFA annually will be welcomed into the Museum. MFA Director Malcolm Rogers led the renovation team, along with MFA Head Designer/Design Architect Keith Crippen. They worked with CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares Inc. (Boston) in the creation of the seven collection galleries and Bergmeyer Associates, Inc. (Boston) in the redesign of the retail and classroom spaces. Architect Michael Jones, Partner, Foster + Partners (London), who was responsible for the detailed master plan of the MFA and design of the recently opened Art of the Americas Wing, developed the plan for the Linde Family Wing. Shawmut Design and Construction (Boston) served as general contractor.

Complementing the works of art showcased in the new wing is an expanded schedule of fun and informative programming designed to further the appreciation of contemporary culture. "Contemporary Thursdays," a new weekly series of evening learning and social gatherings (free with Museum admission) begins on September 29 and runs through November 17 (then will continue on the second Thursday of each month in January 2012). The series includes artist's talks and demonstrations, gallery games, and "Contemporary Conversations," quick discussions focusing on a single work. These are in addition to a wide variety of special programs presented at the Museum, such as gallery talks, performances, lectures, courses, films, and concerts that further the appreciation of the MFA's exhibitions and examine a variety of art-related topics. (For the calendar, visit www.mfa.org.)

For visitors who want to navigate the wing on their own, the MFA has produced a Multimedia Guide highlighting works on view throughout the Museum. It now includes 21 new stops that feature video commentary from artists such as Jenny Holzer, Josiah McElheny, Kara Walker, Michael Eden, Fred Wilson, Wade Aaron, and Doris Salcedo, as well as background information, explanations of technique, and provocative questions to consider as visitors enjoy the works on view, including those by Andy Warhol, Ellsworth Kelly, El Anatsui, and Rachel Whiteread, among others, in the contemporary galleries. Nine new stops in the guide for kids and family focus on fun objects, such as John Cederquist's eye-fooling chest of drawers. In addition, 10 works in the contemporary galleries have been added to the foreign language tours, available in Spanish, French, Russian, German, Italian, Japanese, and Chinese. Also debuting with the unveiling of the wing is the new American Sign Language tour with 106

stops throughout the MFA, including 10 new contemporary art stops. The guide is available for \$5 for MFA members, \$6 for non-members, and \$4 for youth, and is free for people who are blind or have low vision, and those who are Deaf. The guide has close to 650 stops for adults and some 100 stops for kids featuring works throughout the Museum.

To mark the unveiling of the new wing, the MFA is hosting a 24-hour celebration: an Opening Party at 7 p.m. (\$200) sponsored by Atlantic Trust, an After Hours party at 11 p.m. (\$100), both on Saturday, September 17; and a Wee Hours party at 3 a.m. (\$50) on Sunday, September 18, followed by a free Open House from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The opening festivities will also include performances by international and Boston-based artists throughout the 24-hours, and a screening of the MFA's recent acquisition, Christian Marclay's acclaimed 24-hour video, *The Clock*, a compilation of thousands of movie and TV clips of clocks and watches that tell the current time at any given moment. Synchronized with real-time, *The Clock* evokes the present while reinforcing how contemporary art is part of a rich continuum.

The transformation of the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art is a continuation of the Museum's expansion and renovation. In November 2010, the MFA opened its Foster + Partners-designed Art of the Americas Wing, featuring 53 galleries devoted to the art of all of the Americas—North, Central, and South—as well as the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Family Courtyard, a soaring, glass-enclosed gathering space. The plan was designed to enrich the ways in which visitors encounter the Museum's great works of art, improve navigation through its galleries, as well as enhance and increase space for the MFA's encyclopedic collection, educational programs, conservation facilities, and special exhibitions.

The Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art, opening to the public on September 18, 2011, furthers the mission of Joyce and the late Edward Linde. The Lindes' interest in art education and the power of art and art-making to transform the lives of children and adults has resulted in the Linde Family Foundation's visionary grant for community arts programming at the MFA, where the Community Arts Initiative was established in 2005. Joyce Linde has served as an MFA Trustee since 2001, is former chair of the Collections Committee, and former and founding chair of the Gifts of Art campaign.

Open seven days a week, the MFA's hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.; Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 9:45 p.m. Admission (which includes two visits in a 10-day period) is \$22 for adults and \$20 for seniors and students age 18 and older, and includes entry to all galleries and special exhibitions. Admission is free for University Members and children 6 and younger. Youths 17 years of age and younger are admitted for free during non-school hours. On school days until 3 p.m., admission for youths 7–17 is \$10. Wednesday nights after 4 p.m. admission is by voluntary contribution (suggested donation \$22). The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Patriots' Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For more information, visit www.mfa.org or call 617.267.9300.

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