

**MCA
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MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

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MCA DENVER PRESENTS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE JACK BALAS IN THE PROJECT GALLERY

DENVER, June 3, 2008 — The Museum of Contemporary Art Denver proudly announces Artist-in-Residence Jack Balas in the Project Gallery. This exhibition of photographic and watercolor portraits opens June 3, 2008 and runs through September 7, 2008, with a public reception on Friday, June 6 from 6-10PM. A second public reception featuring the artist and inviting portrait sitters and the public will be held on Friday, July 18 from 6-10PM, as the exhibit is in progress until this date.

Jack Balas creates maps and chronicles to reveal connections in unexpected places. Often incorporating painting, photography, and other media, his work presents open-ended possibilities. For his project at MCA DENVER, Balas publicly exposes portrait making. *We Will Be Seeing You* involves a consensual arrangement between volunteer sitters and the artist to create art together. The resulting images, on view for public comment and enjoyment, illustrate the interconnectedness of communities and individuals. Each sitter selects the next participant, moving the story along in seemingly random, unpredictable directions. The result is a progressive and participatory roadmap of new and uncharted paths.

Describing the process for and concept behind his Artist-in-Residence project, Balas explains:

“To create a changing installation and exhibition of photo portraits and paintings done in collaboration with members of the Denver community, I have invited people connected to MCA DENVER to sit for a portrait, and asked them to recommend the next sitter. Based on the idea of extended or metaphoric or environmental portraiture, each sitter arrives at the Project Gallery itself for a photo shoot armed with the answers to a questionnaire I send out beforehand. Normally when I photograph somebody, I ask a number of questions prior – not only about someone's interests, but also about words, phrases or ideas important to him/her, which can be written on signs that appear in the images. I also ask people to bring in some personal objects that may have special significance to them. Thus, the portraits can go beyond the normal focus on surface looks, and can delve into a metaphoric realm. For the last 12 years in photography, and for the last 3 years in painting, I have devoted much of my time and thought to portraiture and metaphor. The installation in the Project Gallery will grow during the first half of the exhibition's run as more portraits are added to the walls in a flow-chart/tree diagram. Some of my time will also be spent working on watercolor paintings that depart from the photographic source material, giving sitters an insight not only into the creative process, but also showing in concrete fashion everyone's potential to represent ideas and metaphor as human beings – i.e., that we all are the stuff of history (and art history).”

~Jack Balas, May 2008

Balas was born in 1955. He received his BFA and MFA from Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. He has exhibited widely, including at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts, AZ; University of Wyoming Art Museum, Laramie and the Tucson Museum of Art, AZ. He received a fellowship from the Colorado Council on the Arts, Denver and from the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.



Above: Below: Jack Balas, *Chris, Skateboarder*, 2007, color photograph, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the Artist.

Programming Events

Opening Reception and Top 10 & WITY Cocktails

Friday, June 6, 2008

6PM – 10PM

Jack Balas will be present to discuss his work in the Project Gallery. This will be followed by a Top 10 & WITY Cocktails event at 6:30PM featuring a presentation by the artist titled "Cats, Rats, and Democrats". The MCA CAFE will be serving a signature cocktail, The Conventional Democrat, (a liberal mix of rum, blue curaçao, half & half, vanilla and club soda), throughout the month of June coordinating with the theme of this event.

Artist-in-Residence Open Studio

Every Thursday & Saturday in June, 4-6PM

Visitors will observe Artist-in-Residence Jack Balas' studio practice as he takes portraits of participants to be displayed in the Project Gallery.

Artist & Sitter Reception

Friday, July 18, 2008

6PM – 10PM

Currently on View

Yu Cheng Chou

February 19, 2008 – July 6, 2008

New Media Gallery

Jasper de Beijer

March 11, 2008 – August 3, 2008

Paper Works Gallery

Trevor Appleson

April 29, 2008 – August 10, 2008

Photography Gallery

Susanne Kühn

May 27, 2008 – September 21, 2008

Large Works Gallery

Jack Balas

June 3, 2008 – September 7, 2008

Project Gallery

Upcoming Exhibitions

Brad Kahlhamer

June 10, 2008 – November 16, 2008

Promenade Space

Omer Fast

July 22 – September 28, 2008

New Media Gallery

Adam Helms

August 12, 2008 – January 18, 2009

Paper Works Gallery

Jane Hammond

August 19, 2008 – January 4, 2009

Photography Gallery

About MCA DENVER

Following the European tradition of the *kunsthalle*, MCA DENVER is a non-collecting institution acting as an incubator for art and ideas, artistic exchange and dialogue. As Denver's first institution devoted entirely to contemporary art, MCA DENVER inaugurated its new environmentally sustainable facility designed by David Adjaye on October 28, 2007. The 27,000 square foot space, located in the Lower Downtown area, is on track to receive the distinction of Gold level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). The design of the building supports rather than defines the Museum's mission and demonstrates the Museum's commitment to sustainability. MCA DENVER marks David Adjaye's first public building in the U.S. as well as his first contemporary art museum worldwide.

Since opening, MCA DENVER has welcomed over 31,000 visitors to the new building to experience the Museum's exhibition program. Continuing our investment in exhibitions of artworks by local, national and international artists, MCA DENVER has five distinct galleries, three spaces for education, multiple sites for special projects/commissioned works and one live art and lecture hall as potential sites for work in all media. These galleries and spaces have been envisioned as platforms for multi-level curatorial possibilities. The exhibition areas are thus seen as a curatorial rubric for interaction between artists, works of art, curatorial practice and interpretive dialogue.

Location, Hours and Ticket Prices

MCA DENVER is located at 1485 Delgany on the corner of 15th Street and Delgany, DENVER, CO. Tel. (001) 303 298 7554. Museum hours are Tuesday through Thursday 10:00AM to 6:00PM, Friday 10:00AM to 10:00PM and Saturday and Sundays 10:00AM to 6:00PM. The Museum is closed on Mondays. General admission to the Museum is \$10.00, senior and student tickets are \$5.00. MCA DENVER offers \$1 off admission to visitors who come to the Museum via public transportation. Children under the age of 5 are admitted free.

Support

MCA DENVER receives annual support for its exhibitions and programs from members of the Director's and President's Circles, as well as from the following generous supporters at the \$5,000 and above: A.B. Hirschfeld Press, Inc., Caulkins Family Foundation, Colorado Council on the Arts, Compton Foundation, Inc., Connie Burwell White & William W. White Foundation, Continuum Partners, LLC, The Denver Foundation, Gates Corporation, Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado, General Service Foundation, The Janus Foundation, KEW Realty, KeyBank, Komorebi, LLC, NSO Press, Riverfront Park Community Foundation, Room & Board, Sage Hospitality Resources, SCFD, St. Mary Land & Exploration Company, Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation, Thicketman Foundation, Three Tomatoes Catering, and US Bank.

For more information about programs and exhibitions please visit www.mcadenver.org or contact Daniele Robson at (001) 303 298 7554 ex.224 or danieler@mcadenver.org.