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MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

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CONTACT:

Daniele Robson
Communications Manager

MCA DENVER

1485 Delgany Denver CO 80202
(001) 303 298 7554

MCA DENVER SHOWCASES LARGE-SCALE WORKS BY DAMIEN HIRST IN A BLOCKBUSTER EXHIBIT

DENVER, September 23, 2008 — MCA DENVER proudly presents Damien Hirst's signature works, including the piece *Saint Sebastian, Exquisite Pain, 2007* from the *Natural History* series, which features animals preserved in formaldehyde and displayed in large glass vitrines. The exhibition opens October 7, 2008 and runs through August 30, 2009. A public reception will be held on Friday, October 10 from 6-10pm. The Hirst pieces at MCA DENVER are on loan from the Artist and the Goss-Michael Collection. This exhibition is curated by Cydney Payton, Executive Director and Chief Curator of MCA DENVER, who is noted for her foresight in presenting artists at crucial points in their careers. Payton has had key timing in presenting emerging artists, highlighting international trends, and in the case of Hirst, showing his work when he is forging entirely new ground in the art world. This exhibition represents years of relationship-building for Payton, and indicates Payton's and MCA DENVER's outstanding international reputations.

"I'm proud to have collaborated with the Goss-Michael Foundation and Damien Hirst to present the first exhibition immediately following his groundbreaking auction with Sotheby's. This serves as a statement that art endures, and makes it even more exciting to present this work to Denver's forward-thinking art audiences."

-Cydney Payton

Saint Sebastian, Exquisite Pain, the central piece in this exhibition, contains a steer that is pierced by dozens of arrows and cable-tied to a steel post. The work is over 10 feet tall and weighs nearly 8 tons (15,873 pounds). This brutal yet noble interpretation of the saint's martyrdom reflects Hirst's concern with the Western tradition of Christian iconography, as well as his interest in the inevitability of death and decay through failures in science and medicine.

In addition to *Saint Sebastian, Exquisite Pain*, MCA DENVER presents two butterfly paintings, one shown for the first time in this US exhibition. These pieces, which Hirst recently announced he would no longer be producing, offer a sense of beauty, vulnerability and tragedy. A medicine cabinet sculpture connects animals and humans to science as pharmaceuticals are created using a combination of synthetic and organic materials.

Hirst's work addresses various themes, largely in response to his personal experience and background. Religion and mortality are reflected through his Pop sensibility, which is direct, yet tongue-in-cheek. Often evoking outrage, intrigue and awe – Hirst challenges established societal attitudes through new explorations of classical themes in art to offer new perspectives on questions of life and death. He is regarded among the most successful living artists working today and is recognized as the preeminent YBA (Young British Artist.)

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WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

Damien Hirst was born in Bristol, United Kingdom in 1965. He lives and works in London and Devon, UK. He received a BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths College, London, UK. In 1995, he was the recipient of the prestigious Turner Prize. The list of exhibitions and collections featuring works by Damien Hirst is illustrious. Landmark exhibitions include *Young British Artists* (1992) at Saatchi Gallery, London, *Sensation* (1995) at the Royal Academy, London and a solo exhibition at Gagosian Gallery, New York in 2000. In an unprecedented step, Hirst recently offered his work directly at auction through Sotheby's, bypassing the gallery and museum circuit.



Above: Damien Hirst, *Saint Sebastian, Exquisite Pain*, 2007,
Glass, steel, bullock, arrows, crossbow bolts and formaldehyde solution,
126 5/8 x 61 5/16 x 61 5/16 inches.
Photo by Prudence Cuming Associates courtesy of the Goss-Michael Foundation.

Currently on View

Omer Fast

July 22, 2008 – January 4, 2009

New Media Gallery

Adam Helms

August 12, 2008 – January 18, 2009

Paperworks Gallery

Jane Hammond

August 19, 2008 – February 8, 2009

Photography Gallery

Terry Maker

September 16, 2008 – January 18, 2009

Project Gallery

Jonas Burgert

October 7, 2008 – March 1, 2009

Promenade Space

Opening Reception: October 10, 2008

Damien Hirst

October 7, 2008 – August 30, 2009

Large Works Gallery

Opening Reception: October 10, 2008

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 45,000 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.

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WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

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 Sunday 10:00AM to 6:00PM. The Museum is closed on Monday. 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. The first Saturday of every month is Penny Saturday, a day when MCA DENVER invites everyone to take part in the Museum experience for only one cent.

Support

The Damien Hirst exhibit is sponsored by Scott Miller & Tim Gill, Alan Becker, Ellen Bruss & Mark Falcone, Mary Caulkins & Karl Kister, Noël & Tom Congdon, Philae & Peter Dominick, Joanne & Ronnie Katz, Carol Keller, Pat Reynolds & Peter Kirsch and Emily Sinclair & Jay Kenney.

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