

**THE FOREST: POLITICS, POETICS AND PRACTICE  
LAUNCHES THE OPENING OF THE NEW NASHER AT DUKE**

***Exhibition Will Feature Works by Petah Coyne, Joseph Beuys, Kiki Smith,  
Yang Fudong and Wim Wenders, Among Others and  
Premiere a Digital Work by New Media Pioneer Wolfgang Staehle***

Durham, N.C., September 8, 2005—The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University will inaugurate one of its two special exhibition galleries with *The Forest: Politics, Poetics and Practice* when it opens its new Rafael Viñoly-designed building on October 2, 2005. The \$24 million museum, a major new center for the arts on campus, will foster multidisciplinary learning and serve the Raleigh-Durham community. The exhibition, which will run through January 29, 2006, will focus on the forest as a theme in contemporary art, examining how artists around the world address issues threatening the natural world such as colonialism, deforestation and war and nuclear destruction.

*The Forest* will include work by 30 artists from 12 countries, most of whom are also making their North Carolina debuts. The exhibition will include sculpture, photography, film, video, digital imagery and sound art by artists from North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Featuring a broad spectrum of works engaging the natural world, the exhibition includes such highlights as Wolfgang Staehle's digital photography project and Petah Coyne's *Untitled #1165 (Paris Blue)*, a delicate sculptural assemblage of silk flowers, tassels and feathers covered in wax. Chapel Hill-based artist Patrick Dougherty will weave branches and saplings gathered from the 7,000 wooded acres of Duke Forest, which surrounds Duke's campus, to construct a sculpture outside the museum's main entrance during the grand opening.

*The Forest* is co-sponsored by Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences, which is working with the museum to develop a range of interdisciplinary forest-themed programs, including lectures, a film series and contemporary dance and music performances. Duke has long been active in the science, history and policy of forestry. The university is affiliated with the Forest History Society in Durham, a national organization that publishes *Forest History Today*, maintains an extensive archive and sponsors public programs that focus on the North American perspective of the forest within a global context. Duke's School of Forestry was established in 1938, one of only two such graduate programs in the United States at the time. The school has since been incorporated into the Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences.

"Given Duke's longstanding commitment to environmental science, as well as the museum's proximity to Duke Forest, we are delighted to present these compelling works that explore contemporary political and ecological issues," said Kimerly Rorschach, the Mary D.B.T. and James H. Semans Director of the Nasher at Duke. "In the university context, the broad array of views represented in these works are meant to provoke discussions about a wide range of interrelated environmental, political and social issues."

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*The Forest* is organized around three themes: politics, poetics and practice. "Politics" will examine works that take a political approach to nature and the forest. This section will be anchored by Joseph Beuys' lithograph *Save the Woods* (1972), which depicts the artist and his students and followers as they sweep the forest to protest an ecologically destructive country club. Beuys was a prominent artist/activist and a founder of the German Green Party who serves as the conceptual and artistic starting point for this section. Contemporary works by An-My Lê (Vietnam), Rosemary Laing (Australia), Zwelethu Mthethwa (South Africa), Sergio Vega (Argentina), Collier Schorr (United States) and Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle (Spain) will examine issues of war, nuclear threat, colonialism, industrialization and deforestation.

"Poetics" will investigate the psychological, fantastic, mythical, spiritual and literary aspects of the forest as manifested in the work of contemporary artists. Some have been inspired, at least indirectly, by the spirit of the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. Other references include Greek and Celtic mythology, European ghost stories, the contemporary Chinese poet-scholar and even the American tradition of Halloween. Artists in this section include Kiki Smith (United States), Jennifer Bolande (United States), Joan Jonas (United States), Anna Gaskell (United States), Janet Cardiff and Georges Bures Miller (Canada), Paloma Varga Weisz (Germany), Paul Etienne Lincoln (United Kingdom), Wim Wenders (Germany) and Yang Fudong (China).

"Practice" will focus on artists who are actively engaged in issues of ecology in general, and forests in particular, as well as those creating site-specific work for the exhibition. Alan Sonfist, an artist who proposes real-life solutions to problems that threaten forests, will be featured, along with pioneering media artist Wolfgang Staehle (Germany) and sculptor Patrick Dougherty (Chapel Hill). Staehle will run a 24-hour loop of digital photographs of the nearby woods.

"*The Forest* is the perfect inaugural exhibition to demonstrate the Nasher at Duke's multidisciplinary capabilities," said Kathleen Goncharov, the museum's adjunct curator of contemporary art, who curated the exhibition. "The artists in the exhibition bring a new perspective to the environment, ecology and politics, three very relevant issues on any university campus."

The exhibition will be accompanied by an 80-page color catalogue with images of works in the exhibition, biographies of the artists and an essay by Ms. Goncharov.

### **The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University**

The Nasher at Duke is a major new center for the arts that will serve the university, Research Triangle area and surrounding region with an extensive schedule of exhibitions and educational programs. The Nasher at Duke is a teaching museum that is committed to an exhibition program that takes advantage of the extraordinary intellectual resources and diverse environment of its research university setting. Founded in 1969 and formerly the Duke University Museum of Art, the museum will inaugurate its new landmark building designed by Rafael Viñoly on Oct. 2. The facility will create a laboratory for the visual arts, a multidisciplinary educational resource and a new cultural destination on Duke's campus, while supporting the future growth of the collection. Additional information is available at [www.nasher.duke.edu](http://www.nasher.duke.edu).

Nasher Museum exhibitions and programs are generously supported by the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Mary D.B.T. and the late James H. Semans, The Duke Endowment, the Nancy Hanks Endowment, the North Carolina Arts Council, the Office of the President and the Office of the Provost, Duke University and the Friends of the Nasher Museum of Art.

The Nasher Museum of Art is located at 2001 Campus Drive at Anderson Street. The Nasher Museum Café presents a seasonal menu featuring local, organic ingredients prepared by chef Amy Tornquist of Sage & Swift. The museum will be open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday; and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. The museum will be closed Mondays. Suggested admission price will be \$5 adults, \$4 for seniors and Duke alumni, \$3 for non-Duke students with I.D. and free for children 16 and younger. Admission will be FREE to Duke University students, faculty and staff. Admission will also be FREE to Durham residents who present valid I.D. with proof of residency, courtesy of The Herald-Sun.

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