

**CONTEMPORARY ARTIST MONA HATOUM CURATES EXHIBITION WITH WORKS FROM MoMA'S COLLECTION AS PART OF THE ARTIST'S CHOICE SERIES**

Artist's Choice: Mona Hatoum, Here Is Elsewhere
November 7, 2003–February 2, 2004
MoMA QNS, Long Island City, Queens

NEW YORK, October 2003—An exhibition organized by artist Mona Hatoum is the sixth in The Museum of Modern Art's **Artist's Choice** series, in which contemporary artists are invited to select, juxtapose, and comment on works from the Museum's collection. On view at MoMA QNS from November 7, 2003, to February 2, 2004, **Artist's Choice: Mona Hatoum, Here Is Elsewhere** presents 60 works by 20 artists and includes drawings, installations, paintings, photographs, prints, sculptures, and videos dating from the 1950s to the present, with many artworks from the 1990s. The exhibition explores three main themes: the body, artists' reinterpretations of the modernist grid, and the street. One gallery is devoted to a video installation by Jane and Louise Wilson. Entitled *Stasi City* (1997), this is the first time that MoMA has presented the work. *Here Is Elsewhere* is organized by Mona Hatoum with Fereshteh Daftari, Assistant Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

Hatoum (Beirut, b. 1952) states, "The title *Here is Elsewhere* reflects the fact that most of the artists in the exhibition, because of their gender, sexual orientation, color, or cultural background, speak from a critical position outside the status quo. I am interested in work that engages with real and poignant issues without being didactic. My preference is for work where these issues are articulated through the visual and formal aspects."

The first section of the exhibition focuses on artworks dealing with issues concerning the body: sexuality, AIDS, gender, and identity representation. Included in this section are several of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* from the late 1970s. This series of staged self-portraits exposed feminine identity as a construction based on images collected from fashion photography and Hollywood cinema. In the video *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), Martha Rosler appears as a housewife in the kitchen, naming utensils from A to Z in a demonstration that seems to turn them into weapons. A series of self-portraits by Ana Mendieta called *Untitled (Facial Cosmetic Variations)* (1972) bear a resemblance to the later work of Sherman. Robert Gober's *Open Playpen* (1987) references childhood and questions the safety of the domestic environment. An untitled photographic reproduction by David Wojnarowicz from 1990–91 narrates the difficulties of growing up in an environment hostile to homosexuality.

At the suggestion of members of MoMA's various curatorial departments, Hatoum also investigates some artists with whom she is less familiar. Jeanne Dunning's photograph *Untitled with Food* (1999) depicts the naked torso of a

seated woman with her arms and legs crossed, a gelatinous substance filling the crevices of her body. Cheryl Donegan's sexually evocative and witty performance video *Head* (1993) shows a woman drinking a milky liquid spilling out of a fluorescent green carton. Ximena Cuevas's short videos *Dormimundo* and *Half Lies: Paper Illusions* (1997) explore the internalized racism in her Mexican culture as well as critique the sanctity of home and family. Tom Kalin's *Third Known Nest* (1991–98) is a poetic video journal featuring literary quotes that deals with identity and equates the body to a map or a political battlefield, especially in relation to AIDS.

Hatoum refers to the next section of the exhibition as the “subversive grid room”, and it consists mainly of the artwork of Ellen Gallagher and Yayoi Kusama. Gallagher's large grid painting titled *They Could Still Serve* (2001) uses the modernist device of the grid but incorporates tiny, cartoonlike symbols depicting African American stereotypes—minstrel lips and bulging eyes—as a disruption in the abstract field. Kusama's grids, such as the etching *Endless* (1953–84), use obsessively repetitive motifs. Hatoum also includes three-dimensional works: in Felix Gonzalez-Torres's “Untitled” (*Death by Gun*) (1990), visitors can help themselves to printed sheets from a stack, each with a grid of pictures portraying victims shot dead in the United States in a single week; and Gabriel Orozco subverts the systemic order of a chessboard in *Horses Running Endlessly* (1995), which consists of 256 squares, instead of the usual 64, and features only knights that seem poised to move across squares to make a series of circles.

One gallery is devoted to a large and haunting video installation by Jane and Louise Wilson. *Stasi City* is a four-screen video projection exploring the eerie abandoned headquarters of the former East German secret police office buildings, where political prisoners were interrogated and detained. The video is shot in a detached manner, as if the artists wanted to expose the residual trace of power embedded in the architecture.

The final gallery shows a group of works that use the street as a source of inspiration. David Hammons's *High Falutin'* (1990) is almost entirely made of objects found on the street, such as a basketball hoop. Also included is an installation by Francis Alÿs commissioned by MoMA to commemorate its temporary move from midtown Manhattan to Long Island City, Queens. *Untitled* (series for *The Modern Procession* June 23, 2002, New York City) consists of a video depicting the ceremonial procession that began at MoMA's midtown location and moved across the Queensboro Bridge to MoMA QNS, along with a group of related photographs and drawings. Participants in the procession carried artist Kiki Smith on their shoulders, as well as representations of works in the Museum's collection by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, and Alberto Giacometti. The event—with its rose petal-strewn route and brass band—emulated Mexican religious processions.

The Artist's Choice exhibition series was initiated in 1989 by the late Kirk Varnedoe when he was Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, with *Scott Burton: Burton on Brancusi* as the inaugural exhibition. This was followed by *Ellsworth Kelly: Fragmentation and the Single Form* (1990), *Chuck Close: Head-On/The Modern Portrait* (1991), *John Baldessari* (1994), and *Elizabeth Murray: Modern Women* (1995).

The Artist's Choice exhibition series is made possible through The Agnes Gund Artist's Choice Fund endowed by Lara Lee and George Gund III, Lulie and Gordon Gund, Ann and Graham Gund, and Sarah and Geoffrey Gund.

About the Guest Curator

Mona Hatoum was born in Beirut and is of Palestinian origin. She currently lives and works in London. Her work, which is represented in MoMA's permanent collection, focuses on issues such as the instability of birthplace, shifts in gender roles, power structures, and surveillance. She works in various media including performance, video, and sculpture. Solo exhibitions include *Mona Hatoum*, Alexander and Bonin, New York (2002); *Mona Hatoum*, Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Mexico City (2002); HUIS CLOS (permanent installation), Salamanca, Spain (2002); *Mona Hatoum: Domestic Disturbance*, MASS MoCA, North Adams (2001); and *Mona Hatoum, The Entire World as a Foreign Land*, Tate Britain, London (2000). Hatoum's work was exhibited at Documenta XI, Kassel (2002). Group shows include *SCULPTURE*, Alexander and Bonin, New York (2002); *The New World*, Valencia Biennale, Spain (2001); *No es solo lo que ves: pervirtiendo el minimalismo, Versiones del Sur*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2000); and *Open Ends: Innocence and Experience*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2000). Ms. Hatoum attended Beirut University College (1970–72), The Byam Shaw School of Art in London (1975–1979), and The Slade School of Art in London (1979–1981).

About the Assistant Curator

Fereshteh Daftari is Assistant Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art. Ms. Daftari joined MoMA in 1988 as Research Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture. She holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University in art history. For MoMA, Ms. Daftari has organized *Projects 70: Janine Antoni, Shahzia Sikander, Kara Walker* (2001); *Projects 70: Jim Hodges, Beatriz Milhazes, Faith Ringgold* (2000); *Projects 70: Shirin Neshat, Simon Patterson, Xu Bing* (1999); *Projects 64: Diana Thater* (1998); *Projects 59: Architecture As Metaphor* (1997); *Projects 51: Paul McCarthy* (1995); *Projects 40: Ready Made Identities* (1993); and *Projects 33: Matthew McCaslin* (1992). She was also the curatorial assistant for *Chuck Close* (1998); *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation* (1996); *Cy Twombly: A Retrospective* (1994); and *Max Ernst: Dada and The Dawn of Surrealism* (1993). Reflecting her interest in modern and contemporary art of non-Western origin, Ms. Daftari organized an exhibition on Iranian modernism titled *Between Word and Image: Modern Iranian Visual Culture* (2002) for New York University's Grey Art Gallery. Ms. Daftari has written widely on modern and contemporary art.

No. 70

Press Contact: pressoffice@moma.org