

**EXHIBITION EXAMINES ARTISTS' EXPRESSIONS OF INTIMATE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF DRAWINGS**

***I Am Still Alive: Politics and Everyday Life in Contemporary Drawing***

March 23–September 19, 2011

The Paul J. Sachs Drawings Galleries, third floor

**NEW YORK, March 16, 2011**—The Museum of Modern Art presents ***I Am Still Alive: Politics and Everyday Life in Contemporary Drawing***, an exhibition that brings together recently acquired works dating from the 1950s to today that exemplify expressions of a personal existence in the world with decidedly conceptual, ephemeral, even opaque means, on view March 23 through September 19, 2011. The artists in this exhibition comment—often directly—on the state of the world around them, highlighting their place within it, or sometimes simply attesting to the existence of an outside reality full of conflicts and politics in everyday life. The installation takes works by Danh Vo, On Kawara, and Cengiz Çekil as starting points from which to examine how artists have registered urgent, violent, and far-reaching political affairs and profound human emotions and traumas—mental suffering, illness, and death—through gestures that may at first appear slight. Often it is through the simplest of gestures—such as writing and drawing—that the most intimate aspects of an artist's life come to the fore. Additional artists on view include Paul Chan, León Ferrari, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Marine Hugonnier, Lee Lozano, Mangelos, and Robert Morris. *I Am Still Alive* is organized by Christian Rattemeyer, The Harvey S. Shipley Miller Associate Curator of Drawings, with Maura Lynch, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art.

In 1970, On Kawara (Japanese, b. 1933) sent a series of telegrams to his Dutch gallerist proclaiming, "I am still alive." Danh Vo (Danish, born Vietnam, 1975) appropriated the chandelier beneath which the Paris Peace Accord, which ended the Vietnam War, was signed in 1973 in the former ballroom of the Hotel Majestic, Paris—an event that led to the artist's exile from Vietnam two years later. For two months in 1976, Cengiz Çekil (Turkish, b. 1945) stamped "I am still alive today" in his small diary each night, a response to increasing military tension in his native Turkey. In all three cases, the simplicity and austerity of the artworks belie the complexity of the realities—political upheaval, displacement, a human life, and languages of protest—that inspired them and that render them politically relevant and emotionally resonant.

Many of the more recent projects concern the everyday and acknowledging the artists' involvement in it. From 1993 to 1996, Jim Hodges (American, b. 1957) sketched flowers in ballpoint, felt-tip, or pencil on used and unused napkins obtained from grocery stores and coffee shops. Remarking on the fragility of life, the passage of time, and the notion of memory, each napkin functions as a remembrance of a particular experience or emotion, like a page in a diary. *Diary of Flowers*, the series of drawings Hodges began in the early 1990s, also functions as a

tangible reminder of the AIDS crisis, which deeply affected the artist; he made his last *Diary of Flowers* "entry" on January 9, 1996, the day that his close friend and fellow artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres died of AIDS.

Beatrice González's (Colombian, b. 1938) work explores sociopolitical subject matter specific to Colombian history and vernacular culture. In 1979, Julio César Turbay Ayala became the country's leader, and González was inspired to produce a drawing a day based on the daily media coverage of his presidency. The artist has said that she decided to become a type of "court painter" with the aim of documenting the spectacle of political leadership. Her simple stylized drawings from this series are fragmentary depictions of Turbay attending sessions of congress; meeting with church, government, and military personnel; and engaging in leisurely activities, thus providing an intimate look at the public aspect of power and depicting an ambiguity between formal rituals and events of society.

Andrea Bowers (American, b. 1965) explores her interest and involvement in activist causes, including environmentalism, immigration advocacy, women's rights, and civil rights. In her works on paper she meticulously redraws images from photographs, often editing out the original background and isolating figures from a crowd in order to highlight the essential message, event, or protagonist. In *Promises, Promises* (2010), a woman is depicted seated on top of the shoulders of another woman, holding a sign that reads "Promises, Promises." The background is blank and, while one can only assume by the poster and the assertive stance of the figure that they are at a rally of some sort, what issue they are addressing remains unclear. By isolating the subjects Bowers moves away from the particulars of the original event and imbues it with a more universal truth—that broken promises are made every day and we need to fight to hold those who make them accountable

## **SPONSORHIP**

The exhibition is made possible by Lawrence B. Benenson.

# # #

## **No. 25**

### **Press Contacts:**

Kim Donica, 212-708-9752 or kim\_donica@moma.org

Margaret Doyle, 212-408-6400 or margaret\_doyle@moma.org

**For downloadable high-resolution images, register at [MoMA.org/press](http://MoMA.org/press).**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Public Information:**

**The Museum of Modern Art**, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400

**MoMA.org**

**InsideOut, A MoMA/MoMA PS1 Blog**

**MoMA on Facebook**

**MoMA on Twitter**

**MoMA on YouTube**

**MoMA on Flickr**

**Hours:** Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.  
Closed Tuesday

**Museum Admission:** \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

**Film Admission:** \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)