

## MIT List Visual Arts Center

### Public Programs

#### PERFORMANCE:

Saturday, May 10, 2:30PM

General Idea/AA Bronson: Triple XXX Rose

Friday May 9, 5:30- 7:30PM

Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11, 2-6PM

Friday, June 20, 6-8PM

Saturday, June 21, 2-6PM

Stuart Netsky: Mile Long Drawing/Muffler (after DeMaria)

Performances are ongoing, yet intermittent, and the artist may be approached by the audience while performing.

#### ARTIST TALK:

Saturday, May 10, 3:30PM, in the galleries

Simon Leung: Rethinking Marcel Duchamp

#### CURATOR TALKS:

Curator Bill Arning explores ideas about "influence" with the art historians listed below. Please meet in the gallery front desk.

Sunday, May 18, 2PM

Scott Rothkopf

PhD Candidate in the Department of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. Rothkopf is a regular contributor to Artforum.

Wednesday, May 21, 12PM

Caroline A. Jones

Associate Professor of Art History in History, Theory and Criticism, Department of Architecture, MIT.

Saturday, June 21, 2PM

Martha Buskirk

Associate Professor of Art History and Criticism at Montserrat College of Art. Her book, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* is forthcoming from MIT Press, Fall 2003.

#### LECTURE:

Thursday, May 15, 6PM, Bartos Theatre

Lewis Hyde

Mr. Hyde is a cultural critic perhaps best known for his books *The Gift* (1983) and *Trickster Makes This World* (1998). Hyde is the Thomas Professor of Creative Writing at Kenyon College and currently on leave to work on a book about "cultural commons."

GALLERY TALKS: Please meet at the gallery front desk.

Wednesdays, 12PM

Bill Arning or Hiroko Kikuchi

Friday, June 20, 6PM

Bill Arning, Curator

Sundays (May 11; June 8 and 29; July 6), 12PM

Hiroko Kikuchi, Education/Outreach Coordinator

Group tours are available by appointment. Call 617-452-3586 for inquiries.

An online catalogue is available at <http://web.mit.edu/lvac>.

*Influence, Anxiety, and Gratitude* is made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Council for the Arts at MIT, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, the Embassy of Sweden, the Edward and Marjorie Goldberger Foundation, the American-Scandinavian Foundation, the Canadian Consulate General in Boston, IASPIS, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, The Boston Phoenix, and Cambridge SoundWorks.



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## *Influence, Anxiety, & Gratitude*

May 8 - July 6, 2003

Curator: Bill Arning

By Bill Arning  
Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center

This exhibition, *Influence, Anxiety, and Gratitude*, features 59 artworks by 33 international artists or artist groups. Each piece refers to, quotes from, or replicates the visual appearance or another aspect of well-known works of art from the past. They have been gathered to invite consideration of the nature of artistic influence as a functional, fecund, and generative relationship between the past and the present. It is in the relationship between artists of the past and the present that we find the promise of a richly creative future.

“Influence” might seem a simple concept, yet when its use in art history is examined, it is a trickier term. Unpacking it, one can trace the philosophical concepts about how art comes into existence, and how using the term may imply that the quality of “greatness” in art is self-evident and not open to debate. Therefore it was critically—and in many ways correctly—disavowed by a generation of art historians.

The etymological roots of “influence” mean a “flowing in” of heavenly origin, describing any agent that changes things whose action is not directly perceptible. “Influenza” has the same origin because the virus that causes the flu was not known when the disease was initially described. For that reason, many art theoreticians argued persuasively that the term was too passive, too one-directional, and that it reinforced a static art history in which the great figures’ names were carved forever in stone.

In conversations with artists, one often hears the reasons they put themselves through life-long austerity regimes—working two jobs, one for money at a “job-job,” one in service to their “gift” in an atelier—which are based on a desire to influence

future culture and join in the discourse on art which at some point called to their hearts and souls from the past. But to join the culture, artists must claim a place within it— a task that requires a mix of familiarity, gratitude, and sovereignty over the history that inspired them.

The works chosen throughout *Influence, Anxiety, and Gratitude* are not subtle in their nods toward history. They have been selected to make a case about the complex relations the contemporary artist has in a fully archived world. In some earlier time, one could isolate oneself from the image bank of visual arts culture in an attempt to discover a pure interior self. Today such a project would too quickly reveal its own absurdity.

The negotiation with the influence of that image bank, if this exhibition’s thesis is true, should be as evident in the subtle choices an artist makes—the choice of brushstroke or a video editing technique—as in the more conspicuous image choices. The process by which unquenchable anxiety over the weight of history resolves into gratitude can be seen clearly in each of the works on view. Once identified, it becomes clear that the engine that produces generations eager to join the call and response of art history is powered by influence received and understood as a gift from the past that must be gifted again to the future. The past and present together in dialogue can produce a future.

This exhibition is divided into four overlapping sections: *Deep History*; *Structures of Canonicity*; *Outside the Canon—a Case Study*, and *The Swaggering Body*. Many works could function in more than one section, but we hope this organizational tool will help to sketch out some of the strategies artists employ to

put themselves in an active dialogue with history. For a more complete discussion of the theoretical arguments concerning the concept of influence, please visit the List Visual Arts Center website at [web.mit.edu/lvac](http://web.mit.edu/lvac) and download the online catalogue for *Influence, Anxiety, and Gratitude*.

Artists in the exhibition: (in alphabetical order)

Matthew Antezzo	Matt Marello
Marco Arce	Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley
Michael Blum	Marlene McCarty
Jennifer Bolande	Yasumasa Morimura
Carol Bove	Stuart Netsky
Tacita Dean	Henrik Olesen
Jessica Diamond	John O'Reilly
Frank Egloff	Clifford Owens
General Idea / AA Bronson	Elaine Reichek
Luis Gispert	Emily Roysdon
Gran Fury	Sturtevant
Richard Hamilton	
Danny Hobart	
Michael Hurson	
Deborah Kass	
Rachel Lachowicz	
Sean Landers	
Matts Leiderstam	
Simon Leung	
Sherrie Levine	
Glenn Ligon,	
Melanie Manchot	