

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Princeton University Art Museum's New Exhibition Focuses on the Body
as Art and Expression**

Princeton, N.J. — This fall the museum presents *Body Memory*, an exhibition of over sixty works of art that depict the body in a variety of guises: as an object and agent of desire, as the site of scientific inquiry, as base matter, as a symbol of enlightened consciousness, as the focus of personal and political allegories, and as an implement for the creation of form. Drawn almost entirely from the museum's permanent collection, the exhibition, organized by Kelly Baum, Locks Curatorial Fellow for Contemporary Art, and Joel Smith, curator of photography, features contemporary prints, drawings, collages, and video, and a wide selection of photographs, both contemporary and historical. The exhibition will be on view through January 4, 2009.

“This exhibition not only explores the wide range of emotional, political, cultural, and erotic meaning projected onto the human body,” stated Locks Curatorial Fellow for Contemporary Art Kelly Baum, “it also serves as a case study for integrating works from the museum's new contemporary art department, established almost a year ago, with those from other departments at the institution. Collaborating as Joel Smith, curator of photography, and I have done allows us to create a fuller, more exciting perspective on a single subject than we would have been able to do alone.”

Body Memory examines the diverse ways in which contemporary artists have used the body as an expressive device. Three works recently acquired by the museum as part of its new commitment to contemporary art set the parameters for the exhibition: Ana Mendieta's thirteen black-and-white photographs, *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints—Face)* (1972); the eight collages from Wangechi Mutu's *Chorus Line* (2008); and Yinka Shonibare's high-definition digital video *Un Ballo in Maschera (A Masked Ball)* (2004). Each work provides a unique perspective on the body, one that is contradicted, developed, or embraced by others in the exhibition.

Although their approaches differ, Mendieta, Mutu, and Shonibare all challenge the classical ideal—a Western construction that emphasizes grace, unity, and purity. While Shonibare combines classicizing elements with signs of hybridity and difference, Mendieta and Mutu render the body wholly other, substituting the grotesque for beauty and propriety. Overall, the contemporary works in the exhibition register important shifts in the cultural, social, and political status of the body in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The photographs in *Body Memory* derive from a wide range of sources, including medical and biological research, tabloid journalism, archaeology, conceptual and performance art, the studios of figural painters, and space exploration. An implicit theme of the exhibition is that during the past two centuries, even as some photographers lobbied to earn a home in the museum, photography in general enjoyed a state of integration with everyday life and a liberty from conventions of beauty, which have only more recently become the goals of other art forms. Camera imagery of the body, in its great variety of purposes and modes, brings these qualities to the fore.

Related Events

Gallery Talks

October 31, 12:30 p.m., and November 2, 3:00 p.m.

Body Memory: A Curators' Dialogue

Kelly Baum, Locks Curatorial Fellow for Contemporary Art

Joel Smith, curator of photography

Princeton University Art Museum

About the Museum

Founded in 1882, the Princeton University Art Museum is one of the finest art museums in the country. Its collection features more than 68,000 works ranging from ancient to contemporary art, and concentrating geographically on the Mediterranean regions, Western Europe, China, the United States, and Latin America, with particular strengths in Chinese painting and calligraphy, art of the ancient Americas, and pictorial photography. As a public institution, the museum is committed to serving the local community, the region, and beyond through innovative and dynamic programming, original research and new scholarship, an active loan program, and the organization of touring exhibitions of its works. By collaborating with faculty, students, and staff, and through direct and sustained access to original works of art, the museum contributes to the development of critical thinking and visual literacy at Princeton University.

The Princeton University Art Museum is located in the center of the Princeton University campus, next to Prospect House and only a short walk from Princeton's Nassau Street. Museum admission is free and open to the general public. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and major holidays. Free highlights tours of the collection are given every Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

For information, please call (609) 258-3788 or visit the museum's Web site at <http://artmuseum.princeton.edu>.

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Body Memory

October 10, 2008–January 4, 2009

To request the following images as 300 dpi JPEG files for media use, contact Christine Liggio at (609) 258-7615 or cliggio@princeton.edu.



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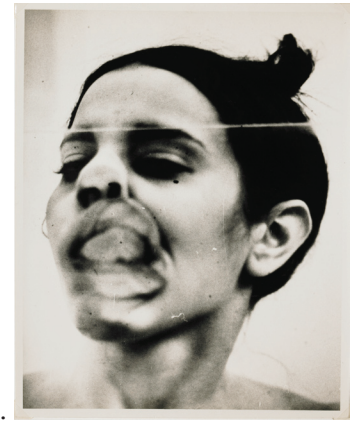
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1. Wangechi Mutu, Kenyan, active in the United States, born 1972 *Chorus Line*, 2008. Watercolor and collage on paper; eight parts, 36.2 x 27.9 cm. each. Museum purchase, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921, Fund (2008-72 a-h).

Photo: courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter, Los Angeles Projects; photography by Robert Wedemeyer.

2. Yinka Shonibare, MBE, born 1962

Video still from Un Ballo in Maschera (A Masked Ball), 2004

High-definition digital video, 32 minute loop; edition of 6 + 2 APs

Museum purchase, Fowler McCormick,

Class of 1921, Fund

(photo: © Yinka Shonibare, courtesy of the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York)

3. James Wallace Black, American, 1825–1896

Enchondroma of the Scapula, 1863. Albumen print, 29.5 x 23.1 cm.

Museum purchase, anonymous gift (2008-62).

4. Thomas Eakins, American, 1844–1916. *Eakins's Students at the Site for the Painting Swimming*, ca. 1884. Albumen print, 9.7 x 11.9 cm. Museum purchase, bequest of Mrs. John E. Long in memory of John E. Long, Class of 1929 (x1988-18).

5. Ana Mendieta, American, Havana, Cuba, 1948–1985 New York *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints—Face)*, 1972, detail.

Thirteen gelatin silver prints, 25.4 x 20.3 cm. each.

Museum Purchase, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921, Fund (2007-41.1-.13). Photo: courtesy of the artist's estate and Galerie LeLong, New York.