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**The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Celebrates Contemporary Artist Glenn Ligon
at the 18th Annual Medal Award Gala, May 20**

Annual gala raises funds to support resources and scholarships for SMFA students



Boston, MA (May 20, 2013)—First presented in 1996, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's (SMFA), Medal Award has been granted to some of the most noteworthy artists and influential art patrons of our time in recognition of their commitment to and influence on the art world. This year, SMFA is proud to honor contemporary artist **Glenn Ligon** at a gala event on May 20, 2013, in the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Family Courtyard at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Glenn Ligon is known for his resonant works in multiple media that explore issues surrounding race, sexuality, representation and language. Ligon has said of his work that he wants to "make language into a physical thing, something that has real weight and force to it." To this end he frequently uses evocative text, quotations from culturally charged and historically relevant material by writers such as James Baldwin, Jean Genet and Zora Neale Hurston, both as a source of imagery and as a means of addressing the politics of representation. He works in a variety of media, including paint, neon, installation, video and print. Throughout his body of work, Ligon surveys America's cultural legacies and situates them in contemporary life.

"We are proud to honor Glenn Ligon's illustrious career with SMFA's Medal Award," says SMFA President Christopher Bratton. "This annual gala event not only celebrates the contributions of important contemporary artists, but it raises crucial funds for our community, contributing to scholarships and resources to set our students on paths of success."

Ligon was born in 1960 in the Bronx and continues to live and work in New York. He received a BA from Wesleyan University in 1982. In 1985, he participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program. Ligon has had solo shows at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. (1993), Brooklyn Museum of Art (1996), St. Louis Art Museum (2000), the Studio Museum in Harlem (2001), Dia Center for the Arts in New York (2003), and The Power Plant in Toronto (2005), among other venues. Group shows in which he has participated include the Whitney Biennial (1991 and 1993), Biennale of Sydney (1996), Venice Biennale (1997), Kwangju Biennale (2000), Documenta 11 (2002), Learn to Read at the Tate Modern, London (2007), and Painting Factory at MOCA, Los Angeles (2012). He has received grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1982, 1989, and 1991), Art Matters (1990), the Joan Mitchell Foundation (1997), and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (2003).

In 2006 he was awarded the Skowhegan Medal for Painting. Upon entering office and moving into the White House, President Barack Obama installed Ligon's 1992 *Black Like Me No. 2* in his family's private living quarters. "Glenn Ligon: AMERICA," a major mid-career retrospective of Ligon's work, was exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2011 and the Modern Museum of Fort Worth in 2012.

Chaired by Carol Noble, the 18th annual gala event includes cocktails, dinner, the award presentation, a silent auction of student work as well as an after-hours party at the Revere Hotel. The Medal Award, endowed through the generosity of the Haynes Family Foundation, has been awarded to Alex Katz, Kiki Smith, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Ellen Gallagher and Robert Rauschenberg, among others.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call 617-369-3591 or visit www.smfa.edu/medal.

Glenn Ligon portrait by David Seidner.

About the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:

Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is one of only three art schools in the country affiliated with a major museum—the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our mission is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate artists—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. If the mission is constant, its practice is always transforming. For more information about our programs and partnerships, visit www.smfa.edu.

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