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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston presents Graduate Colloquium:
“Artists Collectives and Artistic Collectivism”**
March 30 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Image: Camel Collective First Meetings

BOSTON, MA (March 30, 2012)— The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is pleased to present its spring graduate colloquium, which aims to engage artists with ideas of collectives and collectivism, which are themes that reoccur throughout the development and discourse of practice in the 20th and 21st centuries. Collectives and collectivism are invariably initiated by differing motivations, taking many interrelated and changeable forms and formats, including those that collaborate on research and practice based outputs, those formed to provide space and spaces for working and exhibiting and those that provide a space for engagement, conversation and critique on the practices of the members.

What is the basis and nature of collective engagement? How are collectives maintained and sustained? How do collectives mutate, change and in some cases fail? These questions will form the basis of a series of presentations and conversations from and with artists who are or have been founders/members of artist collectives. By joining together in a temporal collective in the guise of a colloquium these questions and motivations will be discussed, proposed and positioned from the speakers’ experiences and perspectives. Please join us March 30.

Since 2002, the Master of Fine Arts Program at SMFA, in partnership with Tufts University, has offered topics for in-depth examination inviting visiting artists, curators and critics to join graduate students and faculty for a day of presentations and panel discussions. These colloquia examine contemporary issues and esthetics, attracting leading thinkers in the field. This event was organized by graduate student Cathy McLaurin (MFA ’13), together with graduate faculty Dr. Tony Schwensen and graduate student Jordan Tynes (MFA ’12).

DATE AND LOCATION

March 30, 2012, 10 am–4 pm
Alfond Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts Boston
465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115

The event is free and open to the public. Attendees must obtain free tickets from a kiosk at one of the MFA entrances to gain admittance.

PANELISTS

Leah Craig is a co-founding member of the **Howard Art Project**, a shared gallery/project space founded by six members of the SMFA community, located in the heart of Field’s Corner, Dorchester, MA. Currently a dozen artists have workplaces in the 5,000 square foot, second story former office building. The Howard Art Project is a proposal-based venue, open to applications from the community at large. Still in its first year of programming, the Howard Art Project has or plans to host art exhibitions, performances, educational workshops and performing arts events. Co-founders include: Chris Ford, Erik Benjamins, Joanna Tam, Jordan Tynes and Taylor McVay.

howardartproject.wordpress.com/ ; www.leahcraig.com/

Carla Herrera-Prats and Anthony Graves are members of **Camel Collective**, a name under which diverse artists have worked since 2005. Camel Collective juxtaposes the methodologies of archival research and dramatization, pitting instrumental reason against affect in an effort to incite an experience that, while stemming from research (institutions), is undisciplined by established discourse. While the interests of Camel Collective are varied, the Collective has long been preoccupied by the political economy of education and the difficulties encountered by artist collectives.

Camel Collective has exhibited at Exit Art, Participant, Art in General and Kunstverein (New York), MASS MoCA (North Adams, MA), Overgaden (Copenhagen), the Aarhus Kunstbygning (Denmark) and Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros (Mexico City), among others.

Camel Collective has been: Sarina Basta, Michael Bears, Benj Gerdes, Melanie Gilligan, Jacqueline Miro, Robert Ochshorn, and Graham Parker. Founding members Anthony Graves, Carla Herrera-Prats and Lasse Lau are Camel Collective. camelcollective.org/ ; www.carlaherrera-prats.com/ ; www.anthonygraves.net/

Benj Gerdes frequently works in collaboration with other artists, activists and theorists, including **16 Beaver Group**, of which he is co-organizer. www.16beavergroup.org/ ; clnswp.org/

Paige Sarlin was a member of **Artists Emergency Response**, a group of artists who collected over 100 video statements in opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, 2002–03. Since 1999 she has been an active participant in **16 Beaver Group** in New York City, a platform for the discussion of the intersection of art and politics. In 2007, her article about 16Beaver Group entitled “A Strain of Conversation” appeared in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*. Two other articles about collectivity and collaboration, entitled “Better Left Unsaid? The Vulnerable Accumulation of Being-in-Common” and “Vulnerable Accumulation: A Definition,” are forthcoming in *TDR* and *Reviews in Cultural Theory*, respectively. www.16beavergroup.org/ ; www.joaap.org/5/articles/sarlin/sarlin.htm

Marilyn Arsem is SMFA faculty member and the founder and a current member of **Mobius, Inc.**, a Boston-based collaborative of interdisciplinary artists (est. 1977) whose mission is to generate, shape and test experimental art. The members of the organization believe an effective strategy for supporting this art is to establish grounds that build relationships among fellow artists. Mobius is committed to structuring environments that foster projects incorporating a wide range of disciplines, which sets in motion situations where the artist's impact can be seen locally, nationally and internationally. Constructing art initiatives outside accepted frameworks and encouraging animated discourse with the public are fundamental to Mobius.

Mobius is known for incorporating a wide range of the visual, performing and media arts into innovative live performance, video, installation and intermedia works. Mobius has produced hundreds of original works that have attained critical acclaim in Boston, nationally and internationally. Works created at Mobius have been presented throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia. www.mobius.org/ ; marilynarsem.net/

Garett Yahn was a founding member of **Lufthansa Studios**, a warehouse turned workshop and experimental exhibition venue in Dorchester, MA. Lufthansa Studios hosted five exhibitions and welcomed nearly 1,000 visitors before it closed in 2011. lufthansastudios.wordpress.com/ ; www.garett-yahn.com/

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.