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**The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston presents
“Histories of Now: Space for Dialogue, Art and Activism”**

A cross-cultural exchange of ideas around the history and future of social movements

Boston, MA (January 30, 2013)—Since the very first mass uprisings of Arab Spring took form in late 2010, Egypt has been a hotbed of cultural and political change. Even now, two years later, the country continues to progressively redefine itself amid protests in Cairo’s Tahrir Square and through social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter. In recognition of this cultural phenomenon, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA) will host a multimedia, international exchange examining social movements during **“Histories of Now: Space for Dialogue, Art and Activism.”** From January 30–March 12, the School’s Barbara and Steven Grossman Gallery will be transformed into a site of international and local discussion focused on current events in Egypt, as well as other contemporary movements and their shared struggle for social transformation.

SMFA’s 2012 exhibition “Histories of Now: Six Artists from Cairo”—an intimate investigation of the complex social framework and formal engagements being explored by Egyptian artists—serves as the basis for **“Histories of Now: Space for Dialogue, Art and Activism.”** Building on the concerns and artistic approaches displayed in “Six Artists from Cairo,” this new undertaking pushes the conversation even further.

The gallery will be arranged with spaces for large gatherings, areas for internet research, and a media library for readings, creative thinking and questioning. Participants, collaborators and speakers include artists who exhibited in “Histories of Now: Six Artists from Cairo,” Egyptian scholars, artists and cultural representatives, international and local activists, cultural thinkers, journalists, members of the public and SMFA faculty and students.

“‘Space for Dialogue, Art and Activism’ is an open-ended project shaped by all participants—be they invited speakers, SMFA students or gallery visitors,” says SMFA Curator Joanna Soltan. “This event is both a study of activism and social movements, as well as a direct experience of a socially-engaged creativity.”

Engaging students in ideas and discussions that shape contemporary culture is an essential part of the SMFA education and faculty involvement is critical to facilitating these opportunities. Full-time faculty Jeannie Simms, whose students will use video components to explore issues of writing histories drawn from dialogue transpiring over new media, will be joining **“Space for Dialogue, Art and Activism.”** Full-time visiting faculty Seth Kim-Cohen’s *Rock and Roll Aesthetics* class will create a band and use the transformed gallery as a rehearsal space. Working in the tradition of collectives such as the Paris Commune and the Occupy Movement, all members will have equal voices in the band’s development, point of view and launch.

“SMFA’s long history and engagement with interdisciplinary thought and practices makes student involvement within this exhibition-as-workshop a natural fit,” says full-time visiting faculty Sam Gould, whose class will also participate. “By asking questions about culture and its efficacy—in the context of global social movements—we set the stage for important discussions around the value of art as more than just a commodity.”

Details of the exhibition will develop over the course of the project and throughout the spring to include public talks, Skype conversations, interviews, lectures, film and video screenings, performances and other yet-to-be-determined contributions. Check online for the most up-to-date weekly schedule at www.smfa.edu/egypt-dialogue.

“Histories of Now: A Space for Dialogue, Art and Activism”

Wednesday, January 30–Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Barbara and Steven Grossman Gallery

School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

230 The Fenway, Boston MA 02115

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday + Wednesday: 10 am–5 pm; Thursday + Friday: 12–7 pm

Closed Mondays, weekends and holidays.

Free admission

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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