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**Julian Schnabel Inspires \$285K Gift to the
School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**
Donation to Benefit Student Scholarships

Boston, MA (May 23, 2008)—The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is pleased to announce a gift of \$285,000 inspired by renowned painter and film director Julian Schnabel. Schnabel was honored earlier this month with the SMFA's Medal Award, which is annually presented to an artist whose work furthers the development and understanding of contemporary art. Schnabel made a bold proposal to the crowd during his remarks, challenging guests to match the proceeds raised during the evening, all of which directly support SMFA student scholarships.

"That doesn't seem like enough," said Schnabel, of the \$285,000 total. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll make a plate portrait of anybody in this room for \$285,000, which is \$200,000 less than what it would cost—\$215,000 less. ... I'm serious about that."

The opportunity to purchase an original Schnabel portrait sparked an immediate interest from a number of the evening's guests. A long-time supporter of the SMFA—who wishes to remain anonymous—recently accepted Schnabel's offer. The matching donation raises gross proceeds of the Medal Award fundraiser to nearly \$600,000, the highest total ever.

"Julian Schnabel is a model of confidence, courage, and humanity for our students. He is an artist who thinks big and dreams even bigger," says Deborah H. Dluhy, Dean of the School and Deputy Director, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. "Schnabel challenged our guests to set our sights higher, to go above and beyond in support of the Museum School. His gesture is a testament to his generous spirit and we are so pleased that one of our guests rose to the occasion."

About Julian Schnabel:

Once considered to be the enigmatic bad boy of the New York City art scene, Schnabel has become one of the most prolific artists of his generation. He rose to prominence in the 1980s producing enormous paintings filled with vibrant colors and bold strokes. His paintings, sculptures, and works on paper have been the subject of retrospective exhibitions in venues around the world including the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Whitechapel Gallery, London; The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Tate Gallery, London; and The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

In the mid-90s, Schnabel shifted his focus to film, writing and directing *Basquiat* (1996) and directing *Before Night Falls* (2000). His most recent directorial project is *Le Scaphandre et le Papillon/The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. Released in 2007, the film has garnered honors from critics and festivals internationally, including Golden Globe® awards for best director and best foreign language film, best director at the Cannes Film Festival in France, and Academy Award® nominations for achievement in directing and adapted screenplay.

About the Medal Award:

Established in 1996, the Medal Award has honored artists such as Brice Marden, Kiki Smith, SMFA alumnus Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Jeff Koons, Robert Rauschenberg, SMFA alumna Ellen Gallagher, and SMFA alumnus Ellsworth Kelly, among others. All proceeds from the Medal Award dinner directly support student scholarship aid at the Museum School. This funding is vitally important to the education of young artists, as currently 68 percent of students receive some form of financial aid.

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 the largest and oldest museum schools in the country. A division of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the School offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in partnership with Tufts and Northeastern universities. SMFA also offers an all-studio four-year Diploma and one-year Fifth Year and Post-Baccalaureate certificates. Through Continuing Education, evening and weekend courses and art-making programs for adults and teenagers also are available. For more information, please visit www.smfa.edu.

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