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**"SMFA TRAVELING SCHOLARS" CELEBRATES MUSEUM SCHOOL ARTISTS AT
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON**

Boston (December 26, 2007)—"SMFA Traveling Scholars," opening February 2, 2008, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), presents current work by the 2006 recipients of the prestigious Traveling Scholarships awarded annually by the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA). The six prize-winning artists include three artists from the SMFA's rigorous Fifth Year Certificate program and three artists chosen from alumni submissions. This year's exhibition includes a variety of media—such as photography, installation, video, and painting—and features artists engaged in highly individual and clearly defined discourses, which characterize the creative risk-taking fostered by the Museum School. **"SMFA Traveling Scholars"** is on view in the Foster Gallery through March 2, 2008.

Since 1899, the SMFA has given Traveling Scholarship Awards—travel grants that annually total \$80,000 to \$100,000—to select Museum School alumni and Fifth Year program students. Among the largest endowed art school grant programs in the country, the Traveling Scholarship program provides each artist with traveling funds to further develop and inform their work, in addition to the opportunity to show their work at the MFA. The Traveling Scholars program has provided critical, early career support for many distinguished graduates of the Museum School including contemporary artists Nan Goldin, Mike and Doug Starn, Ellen Gallagher, and Omer Fast.

"While it was the centers of Europe that attracted the earliest Traveling Scholars, today our Scholars seek experiences that take them around the globe," said Deborah H. Dluhy, Dean of the School and Deputy Director, MFA. "Their lessons come as much from the artists, craftsmen, and artifacts they encounter as from direct exposure to new cultures, geographies, and lifestyles. While we may see changes in what and how artists study, these experiences continue to be critically important to an artist's education."

Selection of the Traveling Scholarship Award recipients was made in 2006 by two independent juries—one jury reviewed work by alumni, while the other selected artists from those participating in the Fifth Year Certificate program.

"Jurors for **"SMFA Traveling Scholars"** were guided exclusively by the quality of the work submitted," explains Joanna Soltan, SMFA curator. "The resulting exhibition combines very diverse bodies of work with the curatorial perspective giving way to six autonomous statements."

TRAVELING SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

The three alumni recipients, chosen from a pool of nearly 200 candidates, are:

Bill Durgin

Durgin (b. Brattleboro, VT, 1970) received a Diploma from the SMFA and Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1995 from Tufts University in partnership with the SMFA and a Master in Fine Arts in 2000

from California College of the Arts. He has had solo exhibitions at Judy Ann Goldman Fine Art, Boston, and Dance Theater Workshop, New York, and group exhibitions at Sara Tecchia Gallery in New York and jennjoygallery and S F Camerawork in San Francisco, among others. Durgin also has worked with clients such as HarperCollins and Dom Perignon.

Durgin's photographs explore the shape of the human body in all its expressive and sculptural possibilities. A recognizable human figure is the subject of his photographs, but each pose manipulates common perceptions about the body.

Will Pappenheimer

Pappenheimer (b. Boston, MA, 1954) received a Bachelor of Arts in 1978 from Harvard College and a Master of Fine Arts in 1997 from Tufts University in partnership with the SMFA. He has exhibited at Conflux, New York; the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art, Grand Rapids, MI; Art Basel Miami Beach; and the Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston, among others. Pappenheimer is currently an assistant professor of Digital Media at Pace University.

In today's hyper-virtual world, Pappenheimer explores an alternative method for interpreting the overload of digital information. He deconstructs hi-tech images and reproduces imagery in simple, low-tech media, such as hand-dyed pom poms.

Laurel Sparks

Sparks (b. Phoenix, AZ, 1972), received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1995 from Tufts University in partnership with the SMFA and a Master of Fine Arts in 2004 from Bard College. She has had solo exhibitions in Boston at the Howard Yezerski Gallery and the Clifford Smith Gallery and exhibited at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA, and Artunited, Vienna, Austria, among others.

Sparks investigates how the beautiful and the grotesque can exist within the same object or being. In the spirit of collage, she fuses materials such as acrylic, glass, beads, and papier-mâché to create a new form with an ever-changing identity.

The three artists selected from the Fifth Year Certificate program are:

Mathew Clay Freeman

Freeman (b. Guilford, CT, 1976) received an Associates Degree in 1998 from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and a Diploma in 2005 and Fifth Year Certificate in 2006 from the SMFA. He has exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gallery at Selletto, Boston; and the Boxheart Gallery, Pittsburgh, among others.

Freeman's work examines the false distinction between man and nature and the opposing spheres this "distinction" creates, including civilization versus wilderness and indoors versus outdoors. Through installation, video, and painting he challenges conventional ideas about food, community, and survival.

Leslie Hall

Hall (b. Ames, IA, 1981) received a Diploma in 2005 and Fifth Year Certificate in 2006 from the SMFA. She has performed extensively in the United States—from New York and Los Angeles to Atlanta and Cleveland—and well as internationally in Canada, Germany, France, and Italy.

From her first gem sweater purchase and the creation of the mobile Museum of Gem Sweaters to a rising internet and rock star, Hall's art celebrates her quirky artist's journey. Music videos from

her band Leslie and the LYs are accompanied by three paintings depicting Hall's big, bold fantasy dream worlds.

Elizabeth H. Wallace

Wallace (b. Washington, DC, 1951) received a Masters of Urban Planning in 1979 from the University of Washington and a Diploma in 2005 and a Fifth Year Certificate from the SMFA.

In a time when neighbors and nations are quick to single out the "other," Wallace explores the points of encounter between these created opposing forces. Her drawings represent maps to reconciliation and new foundations.

JURORS

The jury that selected Traveling Scholars from among the alumni submissions was comprised of artist Ken Feingold, Judy Ann Goldman of Judy Ann Goldman Fine Art, and Barbara O'Brien, director of the Trustman Gallery and assistant professor of art and music at Simmons College.

Recipients from the Fifth Year program were chosen by filmmaker Salem Mekuria, artist Randall Thurston, and Judith Tannenbaum, Richard Brown Baker Curator of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design.

RELATED EVENTS

To complement the exhibition, artists will discuss their work in two gallery talks. The talks are free with admission to the MFA and begin at the Sharf Information Center.

Wednesday, February 13, 6 pm
Will Pappenheimer and Laurel Sparks

Thursday, February 28, 11 am
Bill Durgin, Mathew Clay Freeman, and Elizabeth H. Wallace

EXHIBITION LOCATION AND HOURS

"SMFA Traveling Scholars"

February 2–March 2, 2008

Foster Gallery, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
465 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

Hours:

Saturday through Tuesday, 10 am–4:45 pm

Wednesday through Friday, 10 am–9:45 pm

For more information about the exhibition, visit www.smfa.edu.

HISTORY OF TRAVELING SCHOLARSHIPS

In 1894, James William Paige left a bequest of \$30,000 to the Museum School to establish a scholarship, the income of which would be used to send SMFA students to study art in Europe for a period of two years. This gift had a stipulation that an additional \$10,000 had to be raised and added to the bequest. By 1899, the additional monies had been raised and the first traveling scholar, Mary Brewster Hazelton, sailed to Europe. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Traveling Scholarship Award recipients typically traveled to Paris, Rome, or Florence and

received \$800 per year for two years. These days, Traveling Scholars journey across the globe and the award pool is between \$80,000 and \$100,000 annually.

Digital photography is available upon request by contacting Brooke Witkowski at 617-369-6305 or bwitkowski@smfa.edu.

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About the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA):

Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 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.

About the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA)

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is recognized for the quality and scope of its encyclopedic collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 objects. The Museum's collection is made up of: Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; Textile and Fashion Arts; and Musical Instruments.

Open seven days a week, the MFA's hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 am–4:45 pm; Wednesday through Friday, 10 am–9:45 pm. General admission (which includes two visits in a 10-day period) is \$17 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students age 18 and older. Admission for students who are University Members is free, as is admission for children 17 years of age and younger during non-school hours. No general admission fee is required during Citizens Bank Foundation Wednesday Nights (after 4 p.m.). Voluntary donations are welcome. Gund Gallery exhibition are ticketed events that require an additional fee. The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Patriots' Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For general information, visit the MFA website at www.mfa.org or call 617.267.9300.