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**Artist Rigo 23 to Create Site-Specific Installation Inspired by  
Plight of Political Prisoners for New Museum's Shaft Project Space**

New York, NY... For nearly 20 years, Rigo 23 has created murals, paintings, drawings, and performances, conducted interventions, and published zines advocating for social and political change. His site-specific installation for the New Museum will be the newest in a series of works that take as their subject political prisoners such as Leonard Peltier, Geronimo ji-Jaga (Elmer Pratt), Mumia Abu-Jamal (Wesley Cook), and the Angola 3. Entitled *The Deeper They Bury Me, The Louder My Voice Becomes*, the work is inspired by the words of Herman Wallace, a member of the Angola 3. The project is on view in the New Museum's Shaft Project Space from July 15 through October 11, 2009.

Wallace, together with Albert Woodfox, began the first prison chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1971, at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, also known as Angola. Robert H. King joined them when he was transferred to the prison after being falsely accused of a crime in 1972. The Angola 3 fought for prison reform from within the prison system by a variety of methods. They staged hunger strikes to assure that prisoners were handed their meals (rather than having them served on the floor), they protected young prisoners from sexual predators, and perhaps most importantly, they insisted upon equal rights for all prisoners.

After 32 years of incarceration, 29 of which were spent in CCR (Closed Cell Restriction)—a minimum of 23 hours a day inside a 6 x 9 x 12-foot cell—King's conviction was overturned in 2001. Rigo 23 developed a friendship with King following his release and painted *TRUTH* (2002), a mural in San Francisco's Civic Center to commemorate his triumphant vindication. Wallace and Woodfox, however, remain in isolation. King continues to work tirelessly for their release, sharing his experiences at universities, schools, museums, and community centers internationally, and through his recently published autobiography.

*The Deeper They Bury Me, The Louder My Voice Becomes* is intended to provide a sensory experience, highlighting the confinement of a kind of "non-space" in the museum and challenging visitors with views that mimic those confronting over two million prisoners in the United States, home to the world's largest penal system. This installation steers the viewer to an unfamiliar place—such as a restricted prison cell—to allow individual contemplation as well as

the possibility of a collective conversation about the underlying politics of our justice system. Wallace's words, reiterated in the title of Rigo 23's new work, reverberate between the narrow walls of the Shaft Project Space, but also extend beyond the confines of the New Museum to alert the public to the plight of political prisoners worldwide.

This project is made possible by The Greenwall Foundation and is organized by Amy Mackie, Curatorial Assistant. A new publication will accompany the exhibition and will include a recent conversation between Robert King and Amy Mackie.

In conjunction with "Emory Douglas: Black Panther," on view on the second floor gallery, Rigo 23 will introduce Douglas for an artist talk on July 23 at 7 p.m. in the New Museum theater.

### **About Rigo 23**

Rigo 23 was born in 1966, on Madeira Island, Portugal; he has lived and worked in San Francisco since the mid-1980s. Informed by both the history of punk and DIY (do-it-yourself) aesthetics, Rigo 23's practice adapts itself to the environment in which it is presented. He is well known in the Bay Area for his Pop-inspired, large-scale signs of modified street markers as well as his murals. Though many of his past projects have navigated the urban terrain, he has also focused on global concerns. Most recently he was invited by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego to work with several indigenous communities in the Atlantic Forest South-East Reserves in southern Brazil. His work has been exhibited at the Berkeley Art Museum; the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; San Francisco Art Institute; San Francisco State University; de Young, San Francisco; Richmond Art Center, Richmond; LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions); IT-Park Gallery, Taipei; The Royal College of Art, London; Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói, Brasil; and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago. He was the recipient of the SECA Award from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1999, and has been awarded public commissions including murals for the San Francisco International Airport, the Gerbode Foundation, and the San Francisco Arts Commission.

### **About the New Museum**

Founded in 1977, the New Museum is Manhattan's only dedicated contemporary art museum and among the most respected internationally, with a curatorial program known for its global scope and adventurousness. With the inauguration of our new building on the Bowery, the New Museum is a leading destination for new art and new ideas.

