

Contact: Robert Blanchon, Public Affairs Assistant
212/219-1222 FAX: 212/431-5328

EXHIBITION EXPLORING ISSUES SURROUNDING DEATH TO OPEN AT THE NEW MUSEUM

THE INTERRUPTED LIFE, a multi-disciplinary exhibition examining the theme of death in the Western world, will be presented at The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York from September 13 through December 29, 1991. Organized by Senior Curator France Morin, THE INTERRUPTED LIFE brings together installations, photography, sculpture, painting, video, and film by 42 artists, including Antonin Artaud, Nayland Blake, Sophie Calle, Sarah Charlesworth, Adam Fuss, Mona Hatoum, Tadeusz Kantor, Bruce Nauman, Elaine Reichek, James Van Der Zee, and Andy Warhol. The exhibition installation, as well as the accompanying publication, will be designed by internationally renowned designer Massimo Vignelli.

As the mechanisms for responding to death have become increasingly sanitized and impersonal in the twentieth century, society has become unable to acknowledge or cope directly with the prospect of human mortality. At the same time, scientific developments have blurred the distinction between life and death, calling our established values into question. With the onset of the AIDS crisis, however, death has become a more visible concern in the eighties and nineties for social, political, and artistic action.

Framed by both contemporary and historical documentation and a small selection of cultural artifacts, including nineteenth-century postmortem photographs -- from the collection of Stanley B. Burns, M.D. and the Burns Archive -- that served as romanticized memorials of the deceased, THE INTERRUPTED LIFE will explore how the significance of death is translated into different contemporary cultural practices. Tracing the personal and spiritual journeys from life through death, the exhibition will suggest a metaphorical approach to the topic.

A wide range of issues related to death--from suicide, illness, torture, and war to myths, rituals, religion, and the media's depictions of death--will be addressed through a number of projects realized specially for the exhibition by such artists as Christian Boltanski, Geneviève Cadieux, Larry Clark, Eugenio Dittborn, Ronald Jones, Donald Moffett, and Kiki Smith. The collaborative team Hilton Als and Darryl Turner, for example, will create an installation in the

EXHIBITION ON DEATH AT THE NEW MUSEUM 2/2/2

Museum's Window on Broadway dealing with the death of friendships. A project by John Lekay, examining the technology of cryonic suspension, will include an actual cryonic tank, used to freeze and preserve bodies for future improvements in medical treatment. Amalia Mesa-Bains will create an installation that draws from the Chicano tradition of altars for the dead. Visitors will be asked to contribute to a "living altar" realized in collaboration with Mesa-Bains. THE INTERRUPTED LIFE will also feature the New York premiere of Peter Greenaway's film Death in the Seine. Other artists in the exhibition are Gwen Akin and Allan Ludwig, Joseph Beuys, Victor Bouillon, Mary Carlson, Hans Danuser, Jimmy DeSana, Orshi Drozdik, Marlene Dumas, Jimmie Durham, Laura Fields, Bastienne Schmidt, Jeffrey Silverthorne, Cam Slocum, Jolie Stahl, Mladen Stilinovic, Brian Weil, Frederick Wiseman, and David Wojnarowicz.

An array of educational projects will be presented as part of the exhibition, including: a workshop with Chaplain Myron Ebersole enabling people to experience death through an imaginary trip; an evening of readings with artist Hilton Als, writer Lisa Kennedy, playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, and artist Darryl Turner; Karen Brown, Professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Religion at Drew University, discussing traditional Haitian attitudes toward suffering and death; and David Hufford, of Pennsylvania State University, focussing on cross-cultural supernatural beliefs, such as out of body and near-death experiences.

A 250-page book designed by Massimo Vignelli will be published to accompany THE INTERRUPTED LIFE. It will include an introduction by France Morin and essays by: filmmaker Peter Greenaway on his film Death in the Seine; writer and professor bell hooks of Oberlin College on the celebratory aspects of death in African-American culture; co-editor of Zone magazine Sanford Kwinter on death and concepts of time; cultural critic Sylvère Lotringer of Columbia University on photography and the representation of death; critic Charles Mereweather on cultural artifacts and death in Haiti and South America; architectural historian Anthony Vidler of Princeton University on the politics of death in architecture and contemporary theories of fear; and essayist and novelist Gerald Vizenor of University of California, Berkeley on Native American burial rights. The book will contain artists' projects by Hilton Als and Darryl Turner, Larry Clark, Eugenio Dittborn, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Donald Moffett, and Jolie Stahl. Interviews on the subject of death will also be featured with, among others, William Hartgrove, Jr. of Frank E. Campbell Funeral Home; Saul Kent and Brenda Peters, advocates of cryonic suspension; Ruth Macklin, medical ethicist at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Matthew Berger, M.D., Director of Faculty Practice at Albert Einstein; Yehuda Nir, psychiatrist and

EXHIBITION ON DEATH AT THE NEW MUSEUM 3/3/3

author of a memoir on the Holocaust; Barbara Sonneborn, a filmmaker working on a documentary on widows of the Vietnam War; and Tyrone Soto, a young resident of the South Bronx.

Several projects in THE INTERRUPTED LIFE are presented as part of The New Museum's On View Program. The program enables the Museum to respond to the continually changing focus of contemporary art by presenting new works of art and new artists in a timely fashion. The On View Program is funded in part by the Jerome Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation, and the National Endowment of the Arts. The exhibition has also been funded by The International Cultural Relations/External Affairs and International Trade Canada; The Canadian Consulate General in New York; (AFA) Association Francaise d'Action Artistique, Ministere des affaires etrangeres; and the Yugoslav Press and Cultural Center. Special assistance has been provided by Galerie de France, Fritz Dietl of Radix Group International, Galerie Paul Andriesse, and Jack Tilton Gallery.

The New Museum of Contemporary Art is located at 583 Broadway between Prince and Houston Streets in Soho. Hours are Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday: noon to 6:00 PM; Friday and Saturday: noon to 8 PM; Monday and Tuesday, closed. Admission is by suggested contribution: \$3.50 general; \$2.50 artists, students, and seniors; members and children under 12 admitted free.

Recorded information concerning exhibitions and programs at The New Museum can be obtained by calling 212/219-1355.

Artists in THE INTERRUPTED LIFE

Gwen Akin & Allan Ludwig	Peter Greenaway
Hilton Als & Darryl Turner	Ronald Jones
Antonin Artaud	Mona Hatoum
Joseph Beuys	Tadeusz Kantor
Nayland Blake	John Lekay
Christian Boltanski	Amalia Mesa-Bains
Victor Bouillon	Donald Moffett
Geneviève Cadieux	Bruce Nauman
Sophie Calle	Elaine Reichek
Mary Carlson	Bastienne Schmidt
Sarah Charlesworth	Jeffrey Silverthorne
Larry Clark	Cam Slocum
Hans Danuser	Kiki Smith
Jimmy DeSana	Jolie Stahl
Eugenio Dittborn	Mladen Stilinović
Orshi Drozdik	James Van Der Zee
Marlene Dumas	Andy Warhol
Jimmie Durham	Brian Weil
Laura Fields	Frederick Wiseman
Adam Fuss	David Wojnarowicz