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Weisman Art Museum creates context for an ever-shifting reality with Reviewing the Real

Exhibition dates: June 8 through September 8, 2013

Minneapolis, MN, May 2013 – Subjects posing for a Native American portrait, dressed in “authentic” clothing. The manifestation of a museum that is portable and miniscule. An “inflatable baby” beach toy makes an iconic comment on commercialism. “Cheap tricks” fool the eye through repetition and optical illusion. Collections of fingerprints capture the essence of the human spirit and leave a literal trace on paper. These works, along with others on view, reveal a persistent artistic engagement with the idea of the real. In bringing together these exemplary works from the WAM collection, the notion of the real is seen as ever shifting and the role of artists in defining and redefining the term is highlighted. Reviewing the Real, stands as the final exhibition of WAM’s yearlong investigation of the alluring and often seemingly straightforward topic of the real. Showcasing works form the Weisman collection, the exhibition explores the many ways that artists have evoked the real over time and across media.

The exhibition is divided into six sections:

**Documentary** questions whether actual objectivity is possible in any medium.

**Pictures of Pictures** focuses on hyperrealism and the paradox of the too real.

**The Thing Itself** emphasizes the oftentimes thorny relationship between actual objects and their representations.

**Traces** explores the ways in which artists have both turned to and exploited the value we continue to place on “having been there.”

**Uncut** demonstrates that the strategies for conveying a sense of “the real” are limitless and often contradictory.

**Utopia/Dystopia** examines views of the future and what they might tell us about the real situation from which they are derived.

In the arts, the real typically has been understood in the narrow terms of realism, a style of representation that has been opposed to the ideal, the romantic, and the new (modern). *Reviewing the Real* showcases the various ways that the idea of the real has been invoked, utilized, and mobilized by artists. In presenting selections from the Weisman's collection in this manner, the exhibition seeks to look at key pieces in the collection in a way that moves beyond the traditional and limiting strategy of a necessarily hierarchical opposition between the abstract (modern) and the real (tradition). Guest curator Christina Chang is the curator of engagement at the Minnesota Museum of American Art.

ABOUT WAM

Since its origin in 1934, the Weisman Art Museum has been a teaching museum for the University of Minnesota. Today, education remains central to the museum's mission to create art experiences that spark discovery, critical thinking, and transformation, linking the University and the community. The Weisman Art Museum is located at 333 East River Road, Minneapolis, on the University of Minnesota campus. Admission to exhibition galleries is always free.