

The Bronx Museum of the Arts Presents Exhibition of Michelle Stuart's New Photographic Works

On View February 3 through June 26, 2016

Bronx, New York—January 14, 2016—The Bronx Museum of the Arts will present an exhibition of photographic works by Michelle Stuart, on view February 3 through June 26. Widely recognized as one of the very few female pioneers of Land Art, Stuart is known for her nature-based art dating to the late 1960s and 1970s. Comparatively lesser-known are her remarkable photographic works, which constitute a crucial part of her oeuvre and have been her primary focus over the past several years.

Organized by guest curator Gregory Volk, *Michelle Stuart, Theatre of Memory: Photographic Works* consists of twelve recent large-scale works—including a major wall piece created specifically for this exhibition—as well as two important pieces from the early 1980s that can be seen as precursors to Stuart's later direction. This exhibition is the first museum treatment of Stuart's photography-based works.

"Michelle Stuart is an innovator, and her turn to photography in the last few years, once again, shows that she is always exploring new ways to create unique perspectives on the world," said Holly Block, Executive Director of The Bronx Museum of the Arts. "We are excited to present her recent and new work at The Bronx Museum."

Since 2008, Stuart has been engaged in creating an inventive photographic output composed of multiple, diverse images that are often presented in the form of large grids. Photo-based images are further altered through a unique process that Stuart developed. These form into loose narratives evocative of various times and places, often with autobiographical resonances. Overall compositions—composed of anywhere from nine to 84 separate units—engage her central themes: memory, exploration, history, time, nature, human relationships, the cosmos, and cultural conflict. "These large, gridded works," writes Volk in his essay for the catalogue that accompanies the exhibition, "are combinatory, eclectic, and rich with abundant correspondences and connections. They are also a visually and formally masterful and complex mesh of shifting colors, tones, shapes, and structures."

The exhibition will also debut *My Still Life* (2015-16), a major, large-scale work created for this show—"an autobiographical opus of sorts," as Volk describes it. Photographs of a series of what might be called 'sculptural vignettes' bring together objects and images—including archival and vintage personal photographs, actual things (e.g., a whale bone, a ceramic frog, a pomegranate), maps, celestial landscapes, and fragments of writing on paper, among others—many of which Stuart collected and have been with her for years. In her studio, Stuart formed these sundry materials into evocative compositions, into mini-stage sets that capture multiple realities, then photographed them. By combining real objects and fictive images, and images of images, this work plumbs the genre of the photographic still life in utterly novel ways.

Also included in the exhibition are two works from Stuart's early 1980s *Codex* series, with squares of earth-rubbed paper (the earth is from specific sites that Stuart visited, including a New Jersey quarry and the ancient Maya city of Uxmal in Mexico) surrounded by photographs of the same site. Stuart's *Codex* pieces, with their incorporation of photos, herald her recent photography-based work.

A forty-page catalogue accompanies the exhibition. The Bronx Museum will host a public reception on Wednesday, February 10, from 5 to 8 p.m.

About Michelle Stuart

Since the 1970s, Michelle Stuart has been internationally recognized for innovative works that synthesize Land Art, drawing, sculpture, and photography. Recent traveling exhibitions include: *Michelle Stuart: Drawn From Nature* at the Djanogly Art Gallery, Nottingham, U.K.; the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York; and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California, 2013–2014; *Apparitions: Frottages and Rubbings from 1860 to Now*, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and the Menil Collection, Houston, 2015–2016. Stuart is included in *Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947–2016*, Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, Los Angeles, 2016. One of Stuart's earth-rubbed scrolls was featured in *America Is Hard to See*, the inaugural exhibition of the new Whitney Museum. Other important exhibitions include: *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010; *Afterimage: Drawing Through Process*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1999, and the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany, 2012; *Alice in Wonderland* at Tate Liverpool, U.K., 2012, and documenta 6, Kassel, Germany, 1977.

Stuart's work is in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Art Institute of Chicago; the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Kunstmuseen, Krefeld, Germany; Musée d'Art de Toulon, France; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

About Gregory Volk

Gregory Volk is a New York-based art writer and independent curator who writes regularly for *Art in America*, as well as for many other publications. He has recently contributed essays to exhibition catalogues on Francis Alÿs, Fred Tomaselli, and Ayşe Erkmen, among others. Volk has curated numerous exhibitions in the United States and abroad, including *Elemental* (2013) at Havremagasinet in Boden, Sweden, which featured both Icelandic artists and international artists deeply engaged with Iceland, and *The Transportation Business* (2015) at Jane Lombard Gallery in New York, with works by US and international artists that involve multiple kinds of transportation. He is also associate professor in the School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

About The Bronx Museum of the Arts

The Bronx Museum of the Arts presents innovative contemporary art exhibitions and education programs and is committed to promoting cross-cultural dialogues for diverse audiences. Since its founding in 1971, the Museum has played a vital role in the Bronx by helping to make art accessible to the entire community and connecting with local schools, artists, teens, and families through its robust education initiatives and public programs. In celebration of its 40th anniversary, the Museum implemented a universal free admission policy, supporting its mission to make arts experiences available to all audiences. The Museum's collection comprises over 1,000 modern and contemporary artworks in all media, and highlights works by artists of African, Asian, and Latin-American ancestry, as well as artists for whom the Bronx has been critical to their development. Located on the Grand Concourse, the Museum's home is designed by the internationally recognized firm Arquitectonica.

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