

CONTEMPORARYARTMUSEUMSTLOUIS

3750 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI phone 314 535 4660 fax 314 535 1226 www.contemporarystl.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Karin Moody 314-863-3033 x228

Susan Werremeyer 314-535-0770 x213

eRacism: electronica

**SEMINAL ARTIST WILLIAM POPE.L
TO BE FEATURED AT THE
CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS
April 23 – June 27**

A premier conceptual artist whose works address contemporary social issues, William Pope L. will exhibit new works as well as present a retrospective of his performance art

ST. LOUIS, MO – March 19, 2004 – William Pope.L has expanded the boundaries of performance, installation, and object-focused art for over 25 years. Citing social conundrum as the engine which drives his work, he addresses consumerism, racism, and sexism with dark humor and biting critique. The exhibition features the first comprehensive survey of his performances (including his signature “crawls”) as well as his extensive use of new media, in a 1-hour and 45-minute DVD presentation entitled *The Friendliest Black Artist in America*. The exhibition also includes new work specifically installed for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis – excerpted from video documentation of his performances.

The artist has arranged this exhibition, *eRacism: electronica*, to work as a “comment factory” where each piece elaborates on the other – a visual, conceptual, and audio layering of relationships, until what really matters is the experience of “viewing” itself. These pieces have evolved into sculptural “stand alone” video works that are at once born of previous works and creating a conversation with those works. Included is *Member (Rituals of Ridicule and Appreciation)* a single projection piece created from the documentation of *Member a.k.a. Schlong Journey* performed in Harlem in 1996. Along the Contemporary’s second story catwalk, monitors evenly spaced against the steel mesh wall will feature a looped segment that are variously candy colorized from Pope’s *In Love’s Valley a.k.a. Field Loop (From Birth of a*

National 1914-19 (2001-2). In this new work, *In Love's Valley (Candy Colored Fruit Loops Version 1)*, Pope.L appropriates and re-presents a scene of plantation workers in a candy-colored depiction from the classic 1914 film "Birth of a Nation." In another piece, *A Negro Sleeps Beneath the Susquehanna (What's My Name?/Echo Version)*, Pope.L has altered segments from a 1998 performance piece that are treated, looped, and presented on computer monitors. And lastly, an important inclusion to this exhibition is the artist's ongoing WEB-based project *distributingmartin* that references other pieces in *eRacism: electronica* for a continual visual and conceptual cross-over. (Please visit www.distributingmartin.com).

Known since 1979 for his signature "Crawl" projects, in which he makes his way on hands and knees through city streets, Pope.L has performed in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. The recipient of numerous grants, his art has been exhibited in major museums and galleries. Pope.L currently teaches in the department of Theater and Rhetoric at Bates College in Maine.

William Pope.L will be in St. Louis for the opening and return May 13th for a free public artist talk at 7 p.m. with a reception beginning at 6 p.m held at the Contemporary

The DVD presentation of *The Friendliest Black Artist in America* was created by the artist for the traveling exhibition William Pope.L:*eRacism* (2002-04) organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine College of Art, DiverseWorks, Artspace, and the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art.

Support for William Pope.L has been provided in part by a grant from the Regional Arts Commission St. Louis and the Arts & Education Council.

###

Founded in 1981 by a small group of dedicated volunteers, the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis has grown to become one of the country's most important contemporary art museums. The Contemporary is dedicated to exhibiting the visual arts and artists of our time, and to producing nationally recognized education programs. As a non-collecting institution, the Museum focuses its efforts on showing six to eight exhibitions a year, presenting works by artists at the forefront of the regional, national and international art scene and is dedicated to producing nationally recognized education programs. With its new 27,200 square foot museum, the Contemporary is now poised to become one of the leading voices in the world of contemporary art.

The Contemporary is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursdays 10 a.m.-7 p.m., and Sundays 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors and students (with ID), FREE for children 12 and under. The museum is free on Thursdays.

Friends of the museum receive FREE admission all year long.

To join the museum as a Friend, call 314-535-4660; or visit the Contemporary online at www.contemporarystl.org.