

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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Williams College Museum of Art Presents  
**The Sanguinary Vow**  
November 28–December 4, 2006

Williamstown, MA—In observance of World AIDS Day, December 1, the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) presents **The Sanguinary Vow**. This week-long installation, implemented by Graduate Art History student Amanda Hellman, will focus the public's attention on HIV/AIDS and address issues of stigma and social death connected to the disease. A gallery talk will be held on Friday, December 1 at noon with Karl Stewart of MTV. Stewart will address how AIDS affects individuals, the country, and the world. Other campus and related activities scheduled to observe World AIDS Day are listed below.

In Hellman's installation, red lights will shine in two of the museum's current exhibitions, **American Dreams** and **Creativity and Invention in African Art**. In order to address the disparity of AIDS

cases in the United States and Africa, only one red light will shine in the American art exhibition, while 24 red lights will shine in the African art exhibition. Hellman chose to use red because it is the representative color of AIDS awareness. Additionally, Hellman will install the audio-piece "Improper Fraction," created with Todd Whatley, a Chicago-based artist. In this audio-piece, derogatory and discriminatory phrases are whispered to reveal the stigmas associated with HIV/AIDS and to highlight that oppression often occurs through the social death that comes from prejudice in society.

"The purpose of this intervention is to change the environment in which we view art," says Hellman. "I wanted people to look at familiar works of art differently, giving them the opportunity to reflect on how we could view the AIDS crisis differently."

### **About World AIDS Day**

World AIDS Day, December 1, was first held in 1988 in order to increase awareness and education about the disease and through this understanding stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to the global census, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide is approximately 40,000,000 and believed to be as high as 46,000,000. While Africa accounts for more than half of that forty million, the numbers in Asia, Europe, and South America are rising drastically. In addition, UNAIDS, a United Nations AIDS intervention program, estimates that 4,100,000 people became infected with HIV in 2005. For more information about AIDS, please visit the following websites:

<http://unaids.org>

<http://www.avert.org>

<http://www.worldaidscampaign.info>

<http://www.worldaidsday.org>

Amanda Hellman is a Graduate Student in the History of Art at Williams College, Class of 2008 and an intern at the museum. Her work on this installation continues a 15-year tradition of AIDS day projects at WCMA.

## **Campus and Community Events**

A number of free events are also occurring around the Williams College campus and throughout the community. They include:

Friday, December 1

Gallery Talk with Karl Stewart of MTV

12:00 pm at the Williams College Museum of Art

Karl Stewart works in the learning and development department of MTV Networks in New York City. Believing that it is important to be clear about who he is, he describes himself as " a gay, HIV-positive, Jamaican-American." He graduated from Colgate University in 1991 and earned a M.F.A. from Brooklyn College, where he received the Wilson Lehr Memorial Graduate Theater Award in 1996. He wrote and performed a one-person play *Innocence Lost* at several venues including Princeton University. He founded the LGBT (lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender) alumni support network at Colgate. Currently, he is completing his M.A. in Organizational Psychology from Teachers College/Columbia University.

Friday December 1

Ribbon Ceremony on Schow Lawn

4:00 pm

Throughout the week, Public Health Alliance, a student group whose mission is to raise awareness about community health issues, will be selling swaths of red fabric. At the Ribbon Ceremony participants will link together their pieces of fabric to create a large red ribbon.

Friday, December 1

7:00–8:00 pm

Drum Circle with Otha Day at the First Congregational Church in Williamstown (906 Main Street, Williamstown.)

Otha will lead a community drum circle to raise awareness of AIDS orphans in Africa. Donations will be accepted and will go to "The African Health Organization."

Saturday, December 2 and Sunday, December 3

Honor World AIDS Day at Kidspace at MASS MoCA, 1040 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams

12:00–4pm

During weekend public hours on December 2 and 3, Kidspace, a collaborative project of the Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute, Williams College Museum of Art, and MASS MoCA, will provide special labels marked with red ribbons with additional information about how AIDS affects the world's children. As visitors walk through *It's Elementary! Empowering Youth Through Art*, they will be encouraged to think of all the children with HIV/AIDS who may never get a chance to flourish as artists.

For more information on Williams College events, please contact the Chaplin's Office at 413-597-2483.

The Williams College Museum of Art is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is free and the museum is wheelchair accessible. Contact: Suzanne Silitch, Director of Public Relations and External Affairs, 413.597.3178; WCMA@williams.edu; www.wcma.org.