

PRESS RELEASE

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Williams College Museum of Art Presents

Drawing on Hopper: Gregory Crewdson/Edward Hopper

October 12, 2006–April 15, 2007

The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) presents **Drawing on Hopper: Gregory Crewdson/Edward Hopper**, an intimate glimpse inside the creative process of two artists separated by time but connected through a single subject: the psychological landscape of American culture. This exhibition will feature Edward Hopper's *Morning in a City*, which has recently been treated by the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, along with several of the painting's preparatory sketches, on loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art. Additionally, three enigmatic photographs by contemporary photographer Gregory Crewdson will be on view with their accompanying documentary stills. **Drawing on Hopper** opens at the museum on October 12. A season premiere party, celebrating the museum's fall exhibitions, will be held on November 10 at 5:00 pm. Additionally, Crewdson will speak at Williams College on Saturday, October 14 at 2:00 pm. These events are free and open to the public; a complete list of related programming follows.

"Hopper has been profoundly influential to me as an artist," writes Gregory Crewdson. "Emerging from a distinctly American tradition, Hopper's work deals with ideas of beauty, sadness, alienation, and desire. I think it is now virtually impossible to read America visually without referring back to the archive of visual images created by artists who found inspiration in Hopper's paintings. His art has shaped the essential themes and interests in the work of so many contemporary painters, writers, and, above all, photographers and filmmakers."

This exhibition is an opportunity to study a singular masterpiece by Edward

Hopper in a new light and in the context of a contemporary artist's view of inspiration and influence. Hopper's *Morning in a City*, one of the WCMA's most popular paintings, recently underwent conservation treatment at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center to remove several layers of varnish and wax resin residue that had discolored over time. As a result of this treatment, the painting is now as brilliant as when it was first painted in 1944, closer to the artist's original intentions and open to new interpretations. The surface of the painting once again shows Hopper's remarkable degree of subtle brushwork and varied color. Displayed alongside are nine preparatory drawings or "sketches", on loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art, offering a rare opportunity to examine the artist's working process. The sketches allow viewers to consider alternate versions of this painting and to see how Hopper arrived at the final composition, with its tense, unresolved narrative.

Hopper's paintings, like *Morning in a City*, often capture the suspended moment before or after an event and the psychological effect on the principal character, evoking a sense of alienation, unresolved emotion, and ambiguity. Gregory Crewdson's photography also contains these elements, and he has long credited Edward Hopper as an influence. Crewdson, whose work is also inspired by cinema, uses the American suburban experience as the subtext for the underlying psychology of his subjects. His photographs are elaborately staged, and, like a film director, Crewdson works with a professional crew to achieve the particular details that he envisions for the image. The resulting scenes are often surreal, with a foreboding tension surrounding characters situated in an eerie landscape.

Drawing on Hopper will include three of Crewdson's photographs, two of which have never been displayed in the Berkshires, along with the documentary stills from the production. Like Hopper's preparatory sketches, these stills will give viewers an intimate glimpse into Crewdson's working process and the composition of the final photograph.

Born in 1962 in Park Slope, Brooklyn, Gregory Crewdson studied photography at the State University of New York at Purchase and received his Master in Fine Arts from Yale University. He has taught at Sarah Lawrence College, Cooper Union, Vassar College, and Yale University. He is represented in New York by Luhring Augustine Gallery and in London by the White Cube Gallery.

Programming

On October 14, Gregory Crewdson will present the Plonsker Family Lecture in Contemporary Art at Williams College. The lecture, given annually to

examine current issues in contemporary art, is entitled "In a Lonely Place: The Aesthetics of Alienation from Edward Hopper to the Present in American Art and Film." The lecture begins at 2:00 pm in Brooks-Rogers Auditorium, Bernhard Music Center. A reception will follow at the museum. The Plonsker Family Lecture Series was established in 1994 by Madeleine Plonsker, Harvey Plonsker (Class of 1961), and their son Ted Plonsker (Class of 1986).

In addition, WCMA will offer a series of Wednesday afternoon gallery talks and lectures to discuss the various themes and interpretations of **Drawing on Hopper: Gregory Crewdson/Edward Hopper**.

Gallery Talk: *Drawing on Hopper*

Curator Nancy Mowll Mathews
Wednesday, October 18 at 12:10 pm

Gallery Talk: *Drawing on Hopper*

Steven B. Gerrard, Professor of Philosophy
Wednesday, November 1 at 12:10 pm

Gallery Talk: *Drawing on Hopper*

Michael J. Lewis, Professor of Art
Wednesday, November 15 at 12:10 pm

Lecture: "Sketched and Frozen?: Drawing from Hopper to Now"

Carter Foster, Curator of Drawings, Whitney Museum of American Art
Tuesday, November 28 at 7:00 pm

Gallery Talk: *Drawing on Hopper*

Carol Ockman, Professor of Art
Wednesday, November 29 at 12:10 pm

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. Publicity images for this and other current exhibitions are available for use by the press. Contact: Suzanne A. Silitch, Director of Public Relations and External Affairs, 413.597.3178; wcma@williams.edu; www.wcma.org.