

PRESS RELEASE

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Williams College Museum of Art Presents

Julie Mehretu: City Sitings

April 19–July 27, 2008

Williamstown, Mass. — Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) presents *Julie Mehretu: City Sitings*, opening April 19. This exhibition brings together 12 of the artist's monumental paintings inspired by community, history, and the built environment. Mehretu's compelling canvases re-envision urban experience and rewrite narratives of exclusion, reconciling divergent histories through her expansive, dynamic compositions. The artist will be at WCMA on Thursday, April 24 at 6:00 pm to discuss her work. A reception will follow. This is a free public event and all are invited to attend.

Mehretu's work evokes highly personalized, yet distinctly universal themes that draw on her experiences as a citizen of the world and of the city. Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, raised in Michigan and now a resident of New York City, she employs a dynamic visual vocabulary that combines maps, urban grids, and architectural renderings to articulate complex social and geopolitical structures. The immense proportions, organic layering, and careful detail convey the complexities of the urban environment. Mehretu queries what impact an individual can have, and what one person contributes to the construction of a larger narrative. The interplay between the individual and larger community finds form in the compositional structure of Mehretu's canvases: one must experience them both up close and from a distance to activate the dynamics of local

empowerment within a more sweeping story.

Organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts in collaboration with Julie Mehretu, *City Sitings* also features an enhanced gallery guide, with discussions of each work. The exhibition has been curated by Rebecca Hart a Williams graduate from the Class of 1976. Ms. Hart is associate curator of contemporary art at the Detroit Institute of Fine Arts.

Support for this exhibition has been provided through generous grants from the Joyce Foundation and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

About the Artist

Julie Mehretu was born to an Ethiopian father and American mother in Addis Ababa, the capitol city of Ethiopia. Her family emigrated when her father accepted a professorship in Michigan. Mehretu studied at Michigan's Kalamazoo College (B.A., 1992) and Cheik Anta Diop University, in Dakar, Senegal. She received an M.F.A. with honors from Rhode Island School of Design (1997). She participates in numerous international biennials and exhibitions; individuals and museums collect her work. She receives international recognition for her work and, in 2005, became a MacArthur Fellow.

Programming

Thursday, April 24

6:00 pm

MacArthur Fellow Julie Mehretu discusses her exhibition *City Sitings*. A reception follows. Introduced and moderated by Clark Fellow Chika Okeke-Agulu.

Williams College Museum of Art

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 A. Silitch, Director of Public Relations and External Affairs, 413.597.3178.