



PRESS RELEASE

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Williams College Museum of Art Presents
Recent Work: Aida Laleian and Steve Levin
February 26–April 24, 2011

Photos available upon request.

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Williamstown, Mass. – The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) is pleased to present *Recent Work: Aida Laleian and Steve Levin*. A public opening will preview the exhibition and celebrate the work of these Williams faculty members on Friday, February 25 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. This is a free event and all are invited to attend.

Aida Laleian's recent work marks at once a continuation and a transition in the artist's practice. Combining photography, collage, hand-coloring, and digital printing, Laleian has long challenged viewers' expectations of traditional media. In the past, Laleian has manipulated photographic self-portraits, placing images of herself onto the bodies of animals, and printing her montages onto materials ranging from ceramic tiles to silk flags. In her newest works, presented for the first time in this exhibition, Laleian has evacuated her own image from her collages, and has transitioned from small, handheld objects to large scale, hanging banners. For the past seven years, the artist has hand embroidered onto three digitally created collages. In these works, Laleian offers her viewers lush arrays of contorted bodies, historical costumes, and baroque backgrounds in meticulous pieces that draw attention to the contrast between the rapidity of digital photography, and the painstaking process of embroidery. No longer depicting hybrid creatures within the

content of her work, Laleian has created a composite practice: joining digital media with handmade craft, these works are themselves hybrids. Alongside these three large scale works, Laleian also presents several smaller, photographic collages, whose imagery often echoes and exploits that which appears in her embroidered pieces.

Steve Levin's oil paintings make explicit the eccentricity of the everyday. Depicting dense mélanges of ephemera, Levin creates microcosms in which objects ranging from paper dolls to rarefied art mix and mingle. If, in his earlier works, these objects were relegated to tidy curio cabinets, then in these later works chaos reigns, freeing these objects from the confines of categorization. Exploiting familiar imagery in a strange scene, Levin's paintings seductively invite the viewer to project his/her own memories and associations onto the work, only to trap the beholder in a world of referents that is entirely the artist's own. Thus, Levin demonstrates the paradoxical power of the personal that exists within mass-produced objects, and the evocative potential of juxtaposition that underlies much of the history of display. The exhibition features nearly thirty of Levin's oil paintings from the past nine years, ranging in size and created variously on canvas and copper.

This exhibition has been organized by Lucie Steinberg, Williams Graduate Student in the History of Art, Class of 2012.

About the Artists

Aida Laleian has exhibited her work at the DeCordova Museum, Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago, the Houston Center for Photography in Texas, the Photographic Resource Center in Boston and the Light Factory in North Carolina. Reviews of her work have appeared in *Artforum*, *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Laleian received her B.F.A. from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1978 and her M.F.A. from the University of California at Davis in 1980. She was born in Bucharest, Romania.

Steve Levin's paintings have been shown at Charles More Gallery and Rodger LaPelle Gallery in Philadelphia, as well as the van Straaten and Lyons-Weir Galleries in Chicago. His works have also been displayed at the Roswell Museum in Roswell, New Mexico. He received an M.F.A. from the University of California, Davis in 1980 and a B.A. from Reed College in 1976.

The Williams College Museum of Art

WCMA houses nearly 13,000 works that span the history of art. The museum's principle mission is to encourage multidisciplinary teaching through encounters with art objects that traverse time periods and cultures. An active, collecting museum, its strengths are in

modern and contemporary art, photography, prints, and Indian painting. The museum is also noted for its stellar collection of American art from the late 18th century to the present. With the largest collection in the world of works by the brothers Charles and Maurice Prendergast, the museum is a primary center for study of these American artists in a transatlantic context of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Williams College Museum of Art is located on Route 2 in Williamstown, Massachusetts, in the heart of the picturesque Williams College campus. It is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 am to 5 pm, and on Sunday from 1 to 5 pm. Admission is free and the museum is wheelchair accessible; www.wcma.org.

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