

PRESS RELEASE

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**Williams College Museum of Art presents
Seven Sisters**

New work by artist Jacqueline Humphries

June 3–October 29, 2006

Williamstown, MA— Seven large abstract canvases layered with silver pigment and rich color by contemporary artist Jacqueline Humphries will be on view at the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) beginning June 3, 2006. The exhibition, entitled **Seven Sisters**, features all new paintings that have been created for WCMA's large octagonal "Class of 1935" gallery. The artist will deliver a gallery talk on Saturday, July 15 at 4:00 pm. WCMA's Summer Party will follow at 5:00 pm. Both events are free and open to the public.

The paintings for WCMA continue Humphries' recent experiments with untraditional materials. Last summer, her critically successful "Black Light" paintings were shown at Nyehaus gallery in New York. **John Kelsey** writing in the December 2005 issue of *Artforum* ranked the exhibition as **"the most memorable painting show of this year."**

In this new, site-specific installation at WCMA, Humphries's eight-foot paintings will create a total environment within the gallery walls. The luminous and reflective qualities of the silver pigment make these works at once visually bold and subtly open-ended; as the lighting conditions and the position of the viewer shift within the gallery, the paintings reveal their full

range of depth, color, and form. This experience of the dynamic interplay of materials and light brings to mind the very questions about painting and vision that, in part, led the artist to create these works.

Jacqueline Humphries conceived of this exhibition as a site that addresses *sight*. “I want to give people the opportunity to believe their eyes,” she remarked. “As a material, silver is alien to painting because it’s not a color, it’s a thing,” Humphries said. “It has allowed me to do things in painting that I would not do with red, yellow, and blue. [The silver] guides me to certain kinds of formal solutions that make the material and image and idea all integral.”

The surprising, yet harmonious combination of gestural brushstrokes, pours of paint, and hard-lined geometric forms for which Humphries has become so well known appear again—and with even greater fervor—in these new canvases. Both individually and as a set, the paintings evoke Alfred Corn’s description in *Art in America* of her previous works: “They do not try for conventional beauty and yet they are inescapably beautiful.”

Humphries’s active working process aligns her with 1950s Abstract Expressionism, especially with the movement’s most important artist, Jackson Pollock. Humphries’s exhibition complements the Pollock exhibition concurrently on view at WCMA (**Jackson Pollock at Williams College: A Tribute to Kirk Varnedoe ’67**, through October 1, 2006), demonstrating the continued vitality of Pollock’s legacy for a younger generation of artists.

Jacqueline Humphries was born in 1960 in New Orleans and currently lives and works in New York City. She graduated in 1985 from the Parsons School of Design. She has won a number of awards, including an Academy Award in Art, American Academy of Arts and Letters (2000), a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (1999), a Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (1992) and a Yale University Summer Scholarship (1984). Her work is in the collection of several public institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Saatchi collection in London, the Hood Museum at Dartmouth, and the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo.

The exhibition was organized by Hannah Blumenthal, MA, Class of 2006, Williams College Graduate Program in Art History, with Deborah Rothschild, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art.

Related Events:

Gallery Talk on *Jacqueline Humphries: New Work*

Tuesday, July 11 at 2:00 pm

Curator Deborah Rothschild on the work of Jacqueline Humphries and Jackson Pollock

Artist Talk by Jacqueline Humphries

Saturday, July 15

4:00 pm Gallery Talk

5:00 pm Season Premiere Party

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 Augugliaro, Director of Public Relations and External Affairs, 413.597.3178; WCMA@williams.edu; www.wcma.org.