

University Gallery

FINE ARTS CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
151 PRESIDENTS DRIVE (OFFICE 2)
AMHERST, MA 01003-9331
VOICE: 413.545.3670
FAX: 413.545.2018
www.umass.edu/fac/universitygallery

It is with great respect that the University Gallery presents *The Culture of Violence*, an exhibition that examines the pervasive manifestations of violence as reflected in contemporary American art and culture. Spanning the last 20 years, the exhibition presents a broad, multicultural view of this disturbingly widespread phenomenon through the work of 25 artists in all media. *The Culture of Violence* was organized by guest curators Donna Harkavy and Helaine Posner and will be on view at the University Gallery from February 2 through March 15, and April 2 through May 17, 2002. An opening reception will be held on Friday, February 1 from 5 to 7 p.m. The curators will lead noontime tours of the exhibition on Thursday, February 7 and Friday, February 15.

The subject of violence, always one of the most compelling issues on the minds of Americans, has become painfully relevant since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11. Devastated by terrorist acts committed within our borders, alarmed by mass killings in the schools and at the workplace, and mindful of rampant domestic violence, our consciousness is saturated with violent images. Though we have been chastened by recent events and claim to deplore our fascination with violent themes, we continue to seek them out and reward those who purvey them in news coverage, the movies, popular music and video games.

The Culture of Violence looks at the cultural, social, political and personal aspects of violence in America with the intentions of posing significant questions that encourage dialogue, possibly leading to greater understanding. The exhibition contains a number of thematic categories such as terrorism, hate crimes, youth violence, domestic violence and street crime, among others, which cut across class, color and gender. The strategies and viewpoints of the participating artists reflect this diversity, and affirm the widely held belief that artists are the conscience of the society in which they live.

Gregory Green offers his perspective on the theme of terrorism. Green's non-functional homemade book and suitcase bombs startle us with the realization that virtually anyone has access to the ingredients necessary to fabricate weapons. Mel Chin and David Wojnarowicz examine hate crimes against Asian-Americans and gay men respectively. Wojnarowicz, who died in 1992, responded to the violence and pain in his life, such as gay bashing and AIDS, with an equally aggressive body of work exposing America's virulent and destructive homophobia. Bradley McCallum focuses on the victims and perpetrators of youth violence. He has worked within communities directly affected by crime and uses his art to begin a healing process. In *Shroud: Mother's Voices* (1992), he incorporated his videotaped interviews with the mothers of children killed as a result of gun violence in a New Haven neighborhood. Leon Golub's trenchant street scenes convey the tensions and incubating violence that characterize the contemporary urban condition. In Daniel

Support for *The Culture of Violence* has been provided by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, the LEF Foundation, the Dorsky Foundation, an anonymous donor, Robert H. Fuller, the UMass Arts Council and the UMass Alumni Association.

The University Gallery, located on the lower level of the Fine Arts Center complex, is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. The Gallery is also open during evening performances held in the Concert Hall of the Fine Arts Center. For further information please call (413) 545-3670 or visit the Gallery's website at www.umass.edu/fac/universitygallery.