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Indianapolis Museum of Art Features Recent Films by Josephine Meckseper

*Works address questions concerning the roles of consumerism
and politics in contemporary society.*

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, August 5, 2009—The Indianapolis Museum of Art announced today that it will showcase the work of internationally renowned artist Josephine Meckseper in *Josephine Meckseper: Recent Films*. The exhibition, organized by the IMA, will feature two short films, titled *0% Down* and *Mall of America*, and will open October 16, 2009 in the Carmen and Mark Holeman Video Gallery at the IMA. The exhibition will be on view through February 7, 2010.

Meckseper's films synthesize many of the core issues that she has explored through her works in other media, using imagery appropriated from advertising and documentary footage to create challenging and aesthetically compelling works. The IMA's presentation of Meckseper's work is distinguished from prior shows by its exclusive focus on her work in film. Alternately displayed on opposite walls of the gallery, this pair of works will represent contrasting visual strategies—one filmed black-and-white with intense sound, the other saturated by color with an unobtrusive soundtrack—and intends to promote a dialogue about the connections between politics and consumerism in contemporary life.

"What I find so riveting about Josephine Meckseper's films is the way they are so visually seductive on one hand, yet they also represent a penetrating critique of the way we operate as consumers and citizens," says Allison Unruh, assistant curator of contemporary art. "Meckseper takes contexts with which we are all familiar, such as television commercials and shopping malls, and prompts us to see them in a new light. It is especially exciting to be exhibiting these recent films now, because they raise a lot of provocative questions that relate to pressing issues such as the financial crisis and the war in Iraq."

As Josephine Meckseper states, "I am deliberately confronting the indeterminacy produced by a consumer society on its own terms. My work is informed by a Marxist analysis of how capitalism dictates an inequitable imbalance of power down to the form of commercial products. I look for cultural and sociological end points as a platform from which to invert the semantics of propaganda to create a sense of 'defascination' in the viewer. My recent film *0% Down*, made with found car commercials, negates the manipulative force of advertising by exposing the potential for violence in these products."

0% Down (2008, video, black and white, sound, 6 minutes) examines present-day society's intoxication with speed, power, novelty and transformation. To highlight the hyperbolic character of car commercials created for an American market, Meckseper carefully edits excerpts from these advertisements and sets them to Boyd Rice's industrial soundtrack declaring "Total War." Images of slick cars speeding through the desert, squaring off with oil rigs and fighter jets, illuminate the connections between the oil and auto industries and warfare in Iraq. The title *0% Down* ironically mimics a commercial come-on, while simultaneously making reference to the recent credit crisis and economic meltdown in which the automobile industry has been a major player.

Mall of America (2009, video, color, sound, 12:52 minutes) represents a portrait of the culture of consumption in the United States. The camera meanders through the cavernous spaces of this Minnesota mega-mall, a universe unto itself as it offers almost every conceivable type of shop, attraction and service. Meckseper applies colored filters to abstract and de-familiarize common scenes of store window displays, strolling shoppers and surrounding architecture, and employs electronic music to create a dream-like and surrealistic atmosphere. Reality and heroic fantasy

are intertwined in a scene of a U.S. military recruiting station housed in the mall, where mannequins dressed in fatigues and goggles advertise a life of adventure and action to recruits. The camera zooms into view of a military recruitment video in which mock battles are waged, before returning to the routine activities of mall shoppers. In this work, the terrain of the mall is emblematic of our culture and its inevitable connections to global conflict.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an online publication including an interview with the artist and essay about the exhibition, available at www.imamuseum.org. The artist will present a free talk on December 10 at 6 p.m. in DeBoest Lecture Hall at the IMA.

About Josephine Meckseper

Born in Lilienthal, Germany, in 1964, Meckseper studied at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin before moving to the U.S. in the early 1990s to obtain her MFA at the California Institute of the Arts. Meckseper's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at various international venues, including the Migros Museum in Zürich, Switzerland, Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst in Bremen, Germany, and Kunstmuseum Stuttgart in Germany. In 2008, she was one of two artists featured in *New Photography 2008*, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Meckseper's work has been showcased in group exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, and the Tate Modern in London, among others, and has been exhibited in the Whitney Biennial, Prospect.1 in New Orleans, the Second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, and the Biennial of Contemporary Art of Seville. To date, five monographic studies dedicated to Meckseper's work have been published, and her work has also been included in a wide range of international publications.

Contemporary Art at the IMA

The IMA's robust contemporary art program is evolving as a model for encyclopedic museums as they engage the art of our time. With a renewed focus on its contemporary collection, the IMA has been actively seeking out the works of new and emerging artists through both gift and acquisition, and in addition organizing major traveling exhibitions and commissioning site-specific installations. The IMA has received \$15 million in funds supporting its contemporary programming.

About the Indianapolis Museum of Art

The Indianapolis Museum of Art offers visitors an inclusive view of creativity through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the IMA is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and it features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Through its new articulation of the interconnectedness of art, design and nature, the IMA welcomes its visitors to experiences at the Museum, in 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, which will be the largest contemporary art park in the United States when it opens in spring 2010, and at Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA's grounds.

The IMA completed a \$74 million expansion project in May 2005. The construction added 164,000 square feet to the Museum and includes renovation of 90,000 square feet of existing space. In order to present major exhibitions of its own and to accommodate major traveling exhibitions, the expanded Museum was outfitted with new 10,000-plus-square-foot Clowes Special Exhibition Gallery on the Museum's first level. In November 2008, the IMA opened the renovated 600-seat Tobias Theater. Nicknamed, "The Toby," the theater is a venue for talks, performances and films.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

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