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## **New Exhibition of Sculptural Installations and Drawings by Tara Donovan to Premiere at Indianapolis Museum of Art in April 2010**

*Exhibition will include debut of Donovan's  
room-sized Mylar molecule environment, commissioned by IMA*

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN**, August 20, 2009—The Indianapolis Museum of Art today announced an exhibition of works by contemporary American artist Tara Donovan. Opening April 4, 2010, and on display through August 1, 2010, *Tara Donovan: Untitled* will feature a number of Donovan's sculptural installations and drawings, including a newly commissioned work that will fill an entire room of the gallery. This will be the first major museum exhibition to present Donovan's sculptures and drawings together, offering the most complete view of her artistic practices to date. *Tara Donovan: Untitled* is made possible by a grant from Eli Lilly and Company Foundation.

"One of the chief goals of the IMA's contemporary program is to provide our audience with access to some of the most exciting and innovative work by artists practicing today. Tara Donovan's production is distinguished by its sheer ingenuity, both in terms of how she approaches her materials and the environment of the gallery," said Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. "This exhibition demonstrates the IMA's commitment to promoting ambitious artists and their projects, and I am pleased that the IMA can play a leadership role in how encyclopedic museums can support contemporary artists."

In the large-scale sculptural installations presented in this show, Donovan dramatically transforms everyday materials—such as pencils, Elmer's glue and electrical cable—into sublime abstract environments. Known for her commitment to process, Donovan employs a labor-intensive method of accumulation to explore the perceptual and atmospheric effects that result from a vast multiplication of individual units. Carefully attuned to the innate sculptural properties of these typically non-art materials, Donovan draws on their specific characteristics in often surprising ways. The resulting configurations evoke a sense of expansive growth, as well as natural phenomena such as ripples, clouds, haze and undulating landscapes, transcending the mundane qualities of the materials of which they are composed. Donovan's drawings engage in an important dialogue with the materials and processes explored in her installations. Donovan's inventive use of materials, combined with the untitled nature of the works, promotes endless free associations and open interpretations, encouraging the viewer's active engagement.

Donovan's sculptures engage in a lively dialogue with the legacies of artistic movements of the 1960s and '70s such as assemblage, post-minimalism and scatter art, while bringing an entirely new perspective to her chosen materials through an almost obsessive-compulsive method of repetition and accumulation. Her works have gained renown for the way in which they often spark immediate and visceral responses from viewers. The ingenuity and ambitiousness of Donovan's unique sculptural practice earned her a 2008 MacArthur "genius" award.

"Tara Donovan has distinguished herself as one of the most formally inventive artists of her generation," said Lisa Freiman, chair of the IMA's department of contemporary art. "She's a modern-day alchemist, with an extraordinary ability to elicit unexpected sculptural effects from simple everyday materials, transforming them into installations that consistently surprise and amaze viewers. Her sculptural installations and drawings provoke viewers to think about materiality in new ways."

Regarding her installations, Donovan has said: "Certainly the idea of medium specificity is inherent in my work, but also the idea of abstraction and the sublime. It is often said that

modernist painting is an infinite plane defined only by its framing. This is the same way I feel about my own work with the parameters of architectural space.”

Many of Donovan’s installations can be expanded or contracted to conform to an exhibition space and are often integrated into their architectural setting, in a manner Donovan terms “site-responsive.” In this show, Donovan’s installations, many of which have never been exhibited together, will fill the 10,000-plus square feet in the Allen Whitehill Clowes special exhibition gallery at the IMA, together with examples of her drawings from the past 10 years. In addition to a newly commissioned room-sized work composed of Mylar “molecules,” Donovan’s sculptures at the IMA will include works composed of ripped and stacked tarpaper, pencils, Elmer’s glue, plastic cups, cut electrical cable and adding machine paper.

The IMA will host a reception to celebrate the exhibition on Friday, April 2 in Pulliam Great Hall. Pricing and details of the reception will be announced at a later date.

“Because we want to keep our community strong, Lilly is an enthusiastic supporter of its world-class arts organizations like the IMA—an outstanding institution that helps make our community a great place to live and work through its commitment to art, design and nature,” said Rob Smith, President of Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, which made the exhibition possible. “We are especially proud to support this exciting and unique exhibition, and applaud the IMA for its outstanding contributions to our community’s identity and culture.”

#### **About Tara Donovan**

Tara Donovan was born in 1969 in New York City, where she currently lives and works. Donovan received a BFA from Corcoran College of Art + Design, Washington D.C., in 1991, and an MFA in sculpture from the Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, in 1999. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2007), the Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis (2006), and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2004), among others. Most recently, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston organized a survey of Donovan’s work in a show titled *Tara Donovan*, which opened in October 2008 and has traveled to venues including the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati, and the Des Moines Art Center, and will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in the fall of 2009. Donovan’s installation *Ripple* was featured in the 2000 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Donovan was the recipient of the Alexander Calder Foundation’s first annual Calder Prize in 2005 and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellows Program (nicknamed the “genius”) grant in 2008.

#### **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.

#### **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](http://www.imamuseum.org).

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