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Contemporary filmmaker Omer Fast's award-winning work *The Casting* to be exhibited at the Indianapolis Museum of Art

Landmark video installation looks at the recollections of a young U.S. Army sergeant preparing to depart for his second tour in Iraq

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, August 5, 2009—Presented for the first time at the Indianapolis Museum of Art since its acquisition in 2008, Berlin-based artist Omer Fast's video installation *The Casting* (2007) will be displayed in the IMA's McCormack Forefront Galleries from September 11, 2009 to March 14, 2010. Fast's riveting video pieces together fragments of a U.S. soldier's conflicted memories following his tour in Iraq.

The IMA will be the first U.S. museum to exhibit *The Casting* since it premiered at the 2008 Whitney Biennial, where it garnered much critical acclaim. Fast edited the 14-minute, four-channel video installation from conversations he recorded in Texas in 2006 with a young U.S. Army sergeant preparing to depart for his second tour in Iraq. The sergeant recounts two stories, which Fast artfully splices and interweaves, blending the narrator's recollections of a date with an unstable woman and the accidental shooting of a civilian in Iraq.

The account shifts abruptly between the two stories, juxtaposing footage of the original interview between Fast and the sergeant with dramatic re-enactment of the interwoven tale performed in silent tableaux. Projected onto the front and rear sides of two hanging screens, the installation allows the visitor views of only the original footage or the re-enactment at one time. By walking around the screens completely, the visitor gains an understanding of the construction of the installation and the multi-layered nature of the account.

The story is framed by Fast's exchanges with the sergeant during the initiation and conclusion of the interview, interpreted in the re-enactment as a casting director asking questions of the actor who will play the sergeant. In the storytelling, Fast slips between the roles of interviewer, artist, therapist and film director, concluding *The Casting* with the final spliced-together statement: "I'm more interested in... the way that experience is basically turned into memory and then the way that memories become stories, the way that memories become... mediated; they get recorded and broadcast and things like that."

So concisely stated here, Fast's consideration of how stories, memory and histories are constructed and reconstructed has been a focus for the artist throughout his career. Fast's 2004 two-channel video installation *Godville*, displayed in a 2007 solo exhibition in the IMA's Carmen & Mark Holeman Video Gallery, splices together videotaped interviews with 18th-century character interpreters—in and out of character—in Colonial Williamsburg. In both *Godville* and *The Casting*, Fast betrays a sharp interest in the distance between lived experience and the way that it is interpreted, given meaning and recounted.

"*The Casting* is a profound and engrossing work that delves into the nuanced mechanics of storytelling and recollection," said Sarah Urist Green, assistant curator of contemporary art at the IMA. "The viewer is both physically and psychologically immersed in the sergeant's account, with the physical plan of the installation deftly enhancing the sensation that life—and its retelling—is an utterly complex and fractured experience."

About Omer Fast

Fast was born in Jerusalem, Israel and received his MFA from Hunter College of the City University of New York in 2000. His films have been recently exhibited in Vienna, London, Paris, Washington D.C., and Minneapolis. Fast's recent films include *Godville* (2004) as well as *Spielberg's List* (2003), in which Fast interviews Polish extras from the 1993 film *Schindler's List*,

and *CNN Concatenated* (2002), a film that repurposes television footage of news reporters. Fast's work was included in the 2002 Whitney Biennial as well as the 2008 Whitney Biennial in conjunction with the Park Avenue Armory, where he was selected from among the exhibition's 81 artists as the recipient of the 2008 Bucksbaum Award. Fast currently lives in Berlin, Germany.

Contemporary Art at the IMA

The Casting joins the IMA's growing collection of contemporary, video-based work, which includes significant works by Nam June Paik, Bill Viola, Michal Rovner and RothStauffenburg. Since the expansion of the IMA's contemporary galleries in 2005, the Carmen & Mark Holeman Video Gallery has featured works by Omer Fast as well as Mark Lewis, Lida Abdul, RothStauffenburg, and Jawshing Arthur Liou. 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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