



deCordova Sculpture Park +
Museum
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For Immediate Release

**DeCordova Presents a Panel Discussion:
American Perspectives in the Arts**
Inspired by the current exhibition *The Old, Weird America*

Thursday, June 25, 6:30 pm – free and open to the public
Guided tours of the exhibition preceding the panel at 5:15 and 5:45 pm

Lincoln, MA, June 9, 2009 – On Thursday, June 25, DeCordova will host a panel discussion featuring exhibiting artists Barnaby Furnas and Matthew Day Jackson as well as Contemporary Arts Museum Houston Curator Toby Kamps, Boston-based writer and critic Greg Cook, and Ken Turino of Historic England. The panel will explore the role national history and folklore plays in the interpretation of modern American aesthetics. This program is free and open to the public, with guided tours preceding the panel at 5:15 pm and 5:45 pm.

The panel will be moderated by Megan Marshall, Assistant Professor at Emerson College. Megan Marshall is the author of two nonfiction books. Her biography, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* (2005), has won many awards including the Francis Parkman Prize, awarded by the society of American Historians; the Massachusetts Book Award in nonfiction; and it was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in biography and memoir. Marshall has also received prestigious fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Massachusetts Artists Foundation.

Topics for the discussion will include: What is an American aesthetic, and how does so-called American individuality affect this concept? What is the dialogue between culture, history, and art – and what happens at the intersection of these three ideas? How can the past tell us more about who we are today?

Featured Panelists:

Greg Cook: Cook is the editor of *The New England Journal of Aesthetic Research*, an online blog that features exhibitions and events in New England. Cook is also a regular

contributor to *The Phoenix*, an award winning publication known for its journalism on arts and entertainment in the New England region. A reporter for over 10 years, Cook is also part of a new wave of underground cartoonists.

Barnaby Furnas: A featured artist in **The Old, Weird America** exhibition, Furnas was born in Philadelphia, PA. In 2000, he received a Masters of Fine Arts from Columbia University. Furnas frequently exhibits in museums and galleries across America as well as in Europe; his most recent solo exhibitions have been at Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA (2009); Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, UK (2008); and The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX.

Matthew Day Jackson: Also featured in **The Old, Weird America**, Jackson was born in Panorama City, CA. In 2001, he received his Masters in Fine Arts from the Mason Gross School of Arts, Rutgers University. He currently has a solo exhibition entitled *Matthew Day Jackson: The Immeasurable Distance* at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA.

Toby Kamps: Kamps is the senior curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the organizer of the traveling exhibition **The Old, Weird America**, now on view at DeCordova.

Ken Turino: Turino is the Exhibitions Manager at Historic New England, one of the oldest and largest regional heritage organizations in the nation.

This panel has been created in response to DeCordova's current exhibition **The Old, Weird America**. An award-winning traveling show, **The Old, Weird America** is the first museum exhibition that explores the wide-spread resurgence of folk imagery and mythic history in recent art from the United States. The exhibition illustrates the relevance and appeal of folklore to contemporary artists, as well as the genre's power to illuminate ingrained cultural forces and overlooked histories.

The Old, Weird America has been made possible by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston patrons, benefactors, and donors to its Major Exhibitions fund and by the generous support from Union Pacific and Nina and Michael Zilkha. Its appearance at DeCordova is made possible by Trustee and Overseer support of DeCordova's *The Fund for the Future*. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition is made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.

Seating will be first come, first served, followed by standing room – so come early to the panel discussion in order to guarantee a seat! Looking for other fun events this summer? Enjoy **Free Friday Nights in July** from 5-9 pm. Admission is free after 5 pm; bring family and friends and enjoy roots music, family art activities, studio demonstrations, and tours of **The Old, Weird America**. You can also reserve boxed picnic dinners by Via Lago—email jbiffinger@decordova.org for pricing and details.

About DeCordova

Founded in 1950, DeCordova Sculpture Park + Museum was established to educate as broad and diverse a public as possible about modern and contemporary American art. With a 35-acre Sculpture Park that features more than 80 works, a robust slate of exhibitions, the largest non-degree granting studio art program in the state, and innovative interpretive programming, DeCordova is at the forefront of arts education as well as an exciting contemporary art destination.

DeCordova attracts more than 100,000 visitors from New England and tourists from around the world to its campus each year; trains 200 teachers in arts education; and enrolls 4,000 students of all ages in studio art classes in the Museum School. Known as an accessible contemporary arts museum, visitors engage Museum Guides in conversation about artwork on display, the artistic process, and other issues in contemporary art. DeCordova has 3,500 members and a unique Corporate Art Program which loans work by regional contemporary artists to more than 100 businesses in Massachusetts for public display.

General Information: DeCordova is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm and on selected Monday holidays. General admission during Museum hours is \$12 for adults; \$8 for senior citizens, students, and youth ages 6–12. Children age 5 and under, Lincoln residents, and Active Duty Military Personnel and their dependents are admitted free. The Sculpture Park is open year-round during daylight hours. Guided public tours of the Museum's main galleries take place every Thursday at 1 pm and Sunday at 2 pm. Tours of the Sculpture Park are given on Saturday and Sunday at 1 pm from May to October. All guided public tours are free with Campus admission. Visit www.decordova.org or call 781/259-8355 for further information.

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