

**FIRST U.S. SURVEY OF CHANTAL AKERMAN'S WORK OPENS
AT MIAMI ART MUSEUM IN OCTOBER 2008**

MAC@MAM Presents *Moving Through Time and Space*

MIAMI, March 20, 2008—This October, Miami Art Museum (MAM) will present the first U.S. survey of the work of renowned filmmaker and artist Chantal Akerman. *Chantal Akerman: Moving Through Time and Space* features five of Akerman's multi-media video installations, including a new work commissioned expressly for this show. The third installment in MAM's innovative collaboration with Miami Art Central, MAC@MAM, *Moving Through Time and Space* will premiere on October 10, 2008 and remain on view through January 18, 2009. The exhibition was jointly organized by MAC@MAM with the Blaffer Gallery at the University of Houston, the List Center for the Arts at MIT, and the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.

A filmmaker of extraordinary range and uncompromising vision, Akerman (b. 1950, Belgium) has made more than 25 films in her 30-year career. *Chantal Akerman: Moving Through Time and Space* will include four major installations from her documentary series: *From the East: Bordering on Fiction*, *South*, *From the Other Side*, and *Down There*, as well as the new two-channel video installation, *Women from Antwerp in November*, which had its world premiere with this exhibition.

"Chantal Akerman has a gift for extracting important social and political content from the stuff of everyday life. Her films talk about the individual and the collective, immigration, and cultural ancestry," said Terence Riley, Director of Miami Art Museum. "The issues she touches with her work have a strong resonance with Miami, a city made up of a broad social fabric woven from many individual stories of personal journey and growth. Through our MAC @MAM collaboration, we continue to provide our visitors with the opportunity to connect with the work of today's most compelling artists."

Akerman's work melds documentary filmmaking techniques with video installation, and employs a sharp social and political wit, strong visual grace, and a keen attention to detail. This survey explores her crossover work in the genres of film and visual art, and allows the audience to examine the full trajectory of her career.

“Akerman is one of the most important filmmakers of her generation,” said curator Rina Carvajal. “She has renewed cinematographic language and made a significant contribution to visual arts through film. Her work is about people and their lives and about memory and the renewal of connection with the past.”

In *From the East: Bordering on Fiction*, multiple video monitors fill a large, dimly lit room, retracing a journey that extends from the end of summer to the deepest winter, and from East Germany, across Poland and the Baltic states, to Moscow. This experimental documentary is a compendium of striking, interrelated images of Eastern Europe and its citizens in the transition period following the end of the Cold War. There is no narration, and the beautiful, enigmatic imagery conveys no clear point (except the idea of transitions). Instead, assuming a seemingly objective, omniscient point of view, Akerman’s relentless cameras deliver an impressionistic report from this new front.

Akerman’s *South* began as a “meditation on the American South,” inspired by her love for the work of writers William Faulkner and James Baldwin. Shortly before Akerman began filming, however, a black man by the name of James Byrd Jr. was brutally murdered in Jasper, Texas, and the direction of Akerman’s film quickly shifted from an elegant meditation on the South to a passionate documentary capturing the emotionally tumultuous aftermath of Byrd’s murder. The film opens in characteristic Akerman fashion with static images of a small church anchored in Jasper’s lush surroundings. Akerman then leads the viewer down the length of the road where Byrd’s body was dragged, contrasting the shock of racial violence with the transcendent beauty of the wild countryside along the fateful road.

From the Other Side is an unsentimental look at the plight of illegal Mexican immigrants as they attempt the dangerous crossing from Agua Prieta in Sonora, Mexico, to Douglas, Ariz. In this documentary, Akerman assumes an unobtrusive and objective standpoint, avoiding an omniscient narrator, who “might suggest an unequal power relationship between filmmaker and the filmed,” and using long camera angles that capture the miles of fence along the Mexico-Arizona border to produce an air of uninterrupted verisimilitude.

In a radical break from her distanced point of view in the works from her American Stories (Histoires d'Amérique) series, such as *South* or *From the Other Side*, Akerman approached a subject directly linked to her own history in *Down There*, a rare self-reflective piece on the artist's Jewish heritage filmed almost entirely in her apartment in Tel Aviv. At first, Akerman did not want to make a film in Israel, convinced that neutrality would be impossible and that her own subjectivity would interfere. "When I make a documentary, my greatest desire is that it have nothing directly to do with my own story or that of the Jews. I thought that, to contemplate Israel, one had to go to Afghanistan, or somewhere else, like New York, but certainly not Israel," she explains. "Then I went to Tel Aviv University to teach film. One day I took the camera and sat down, and suddenly there was an image, a shot. I thought it was a great picture. After that, all I had to do was wait and let things run their course."

Finally, *Moving Through Time and Space* will feature a new two-channel video installation, *Women from Antwerp in November*. The work is comprised of two monumentally scaled projections, and explores notions of time and space through a series of short vignettes alternating between color and black and white, each featuring women smoking at night in various ambiguous settings. These short narratives – presented together in a long horizontal, split screen format – offer a compelling array of psychological and emotional scenarios as women engage in wordless social interplay. On the opposite wall, a single frame shows a languid four minute loop filmed in black and white of a young woman lighting, smoking and extinguishing her cigarette. *Women from Antwerp in November* is redolent in an atmosphere of 1950s French and American film noir, touching on Akerman's foundation in feminist filmmaking and her deep connection to a highly personal, yet distant, cinematic point of view. "I made five moving images that work together like a landscape," Akerman explains. "You can imagine what has come before and what might come after, but each short passage is, by itself, abstract and unsettled."

MAC@MAM

MAC@MAM is a unique collaboration between two major Miami cultural institutions. Merging MAC's cutting-edge exhibitions program into MAM's nationally recognized museum program, MAC@MAM provides an exciting new contemporary art resource in Miami's thriving arts community. Conceived by MAC founder and MAM Trustee Ella

Fontanals-Cisneros, together with leadership of Miami Art Museum, MAC@MAM enhances and expands Miami Art Museum's contemporary programs in anticipation of the museum's move to a state-of-the-art new waterfront building designed by architects Herzog and de Meuron in 2012. Previous exhibitions have included *Melanie Smith with Rafael Ortega: Parres Trilogy* and *Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller: The Killing Machine and Other Stories 1995-2007*.

Miami Art Museum

Miami Art Museum serves one of the most diverse and fast-growing regions of the country, where a confluence of North and Latin American cultures adds vibrancy and texture to the civic landscape. MAM embraces its role as a cultural anchor and touchstone in a city that welcomes countless ethnic and age groups, lifestyles and ideas.

MAM's far-ranging vision is expressed in the breadth and depth of its exhibition program, to its ambitious education and public programs. The Museum continues to build its collection of holdings from the twentieth century through the present, as it embarks on a major new building and expansion project. The new MAM designed by Herzog & de Meuron will open in downtown Miami's Museum Park in 2012.

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