

Santa Fe Art Institute

For immediate release
June 19, 2007

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Page: 1/2

The Santa Fe Art Institute's >COMFORTZONE< Exhibition Opens June 30th

Public Opening June 30, 3-5pm at SFAI

Exhibition runs June 30 - August 3

Under the theme COMFORTZONE, the Santa Fe Art Institute brings to Santa Fe an amazing group of artists and writers who focus on the role of the arts in activism. Artists in all disciplines have long served as the voice of conscience, often helping to keep the rest of us from slipping into rationalized states of indifference in the face of some pretty awful realities. These artists and writers approach the world from a different angle, to comment upon or simply bear witness to events and forces that might otherwise be overlooked or ignored. By creating art, they allow the viewer to consider the implications of events on a personal and immediate level. Art has the power to touch the emotions and intellect at the same time, and the directness and power of such work can be life changing.

Included in the >COMFORTZONE< exhibition will be work by:

Mel Chin – Though he is classically trained, Chin's art, which is both analytical and poetic, evades easy classification. Alchemy, botany, and ecology are but a few of the disciplines that intersect in his work. He insinuates art into unlikely places, including destroyed homes, toxic landfills, and even popular television, investigating how art can provoke greater social awareness and responsibility.

Juan Manuel Echavarría – Since 1995 Echavarría's work has been concerned with finding new ways to document Columbia's grotesquely violent civil conflict. Echavarría's disturbingly beautiful pictures evoke the dread and human waste of this endless war without presenting a succession of bloody corpses. By turning his camera to the blind spots in the social fabric of Colombia, Echavarría creates a record of violence everywhere.

Harrell Fletcher – Harrell Fletcher's work stems from a fundamental need to better connect people and community with art. His brilliance lies not only in fostering the connection between art and audience, but in bringing the audience into the art-making process, blurring the line between art-maker and art-viewer.

Coco Fusco – Coco Fusco is a New York-based interdisciplinary artist and writer. She has performed, lectured, exhibited, and curated around the world since 1988. Her work is provocative, thoughtful, and without a doubt qualifies her as an activist artist.

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The Santa Fe Art Institute, an independent educational non-profit organization founded in 1985, is committed to programs that nurture artists and enhance and promote the arts as an essential element of American culture and society. Visit our website at www.sfai.org.

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Hans Haacke – In his work Haacke touches on taboos in the social system, using his art to aim for the nerve-center of the establishment. He cannot be bracketed in any artistic trend; his works consist of text and photograph, simple direct text, or paint.

Barbara Hammer – A respected member of the avant-garde and queer film communities for more than 30 years, Hammer has made over 80 films and videos. Her explorations have yielded singular results: daring, unorthodox works exhibiting a dizzying array of visual juxtapositions, colors, textures, and formats that provoke visceral sensations while pulling apart and reconfiguring cultural representations of lesbian history, sexuality and other marginalized narratives.

Edgar Heap of Birds – The artworks of Hock E Aye VI Edgar Heap of Birds include multi-disciplinary forms of public art messages, large-scale drawings, Neuf Series acrylic paintings, prints, and monumental porcelain enamel-on-steel outdoor sculpture. His work engages the gap that exists between commonly held ideas and the realities of the history of the indigenous peoples of the US.

David Maisel – David Maisel is a photographer and visual artist who, for more than twenty years, has chronicled the tensions between nature and culture in his large-scaled photographs of environmentally impacted landscapes. His images are simultaneously beautiful and disturbing.

Dyanna Taylor – Dyanna Taylor, a director and veteran cinematographer, has had a long and distinguished career. Her films explore many of the most pressing issues of social justice and human rights today.

This series is partially funded by the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission and the 1% Lodgers' Tax. It is made possible in part by New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs.