



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Exhibition

Geoffrey Farmer

at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

February 8 to April 20, 2008

Montréal, January 29, 2008. "The *Geoffrey Farmer* exhibition is the largest devoted to this artist to date. Nothing we know about the Vancouver scene could have predicted this work." Those are the enthusiastic words with which Musée Director Marc Mayer presents the new exhibition **Geoffrey Farmer** slated to run from February 8 to April 20, 2008 at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, thanks to the generous support of BMO Financial Group.

Geoffrey Farmer is certainly one of the most unique and disconcerting voices in the Vancouver art community. Borrowing elements from conceptual and installation art, he practices an aesthetics of accumulation to works that incorporate sculpture, video, performance, drawing, photography and the found object. In a tone that combines poetry and social commentary, Farmer examines history, pop culture and art history, as well as the exhibition process itself, with its fictional power and its temporal aspect.

Exhibition

The exhibition comprises some twenty works produced over the last fifteen years, including some new pieces produced especially for the show. Within this second group is *The Idea and the Absence of the Idea*, 2008. Farmer has cut out a small area of the gallery's wooden floor, reduced it to a pulp and then used it to make a piece of paper on which he has written a quotation from Gordon Matta-Clark: "Not the Work, the Worker." Here the artist employs a favourite strategy of his: defining the work on the basis of the process that gave rise to it.

Also featured are key works that have marked Farmer's career, such as *Trailer* and *Entrepreneur Alone Returning Back to Sculptural Form*, both from 2002. The former refers to the cinematic in order to give form to an intense personal experience. While an art student, Farmer witnessed an accident in which a woman was struck and crushed by a semi-trailer. In the latter, the artist has developed an ongoing site specific work, reinstalled for the Musée, exploring the disintegration of identity within the working world.

Finally, a large part of the last gallery is taken up by the spectacular installation *The Last Two Million Years*, first shown in 2007 at The Drawing Room in London and presented here in a new form. The work consists of hundreds of images cut out from a copy of an eponymous book published in the 1970s by Reader's Digest, which set out to sum up the entire history of humankind in a single volume. Farmer, in turn, literally cuts up history (and the encyclopaedia!) in a series of free associations that haphazardly mixes periods, cultures and regions. According to exhibition curator Pierre Landry, "The result is monumental and fragile, ordered and chaotic, serious and humorous—and extraordinarily poetic."

Geoffrey Farmer

Geoffrey Farmer was born on Eagle Island, British Columbia, in 1967, and lives and works in Vancouver. Through his studies at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver and at

the San Francisco Art Institute, he developed a strong interest in the notions of process and transformation, as well as narrative structure. Represented by the Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver, Farmer has seen his career take off meteorically in the last few years. In 2007 alone, he was the subject of a one-man show at The Drawing Room, London, with *The Last Two Million Years*, and took part in the group exhibitions *Remuer ciel et terre*, in conjunction with CIAC's Biennale de Montréal, and *The World as a Stage* at the Tate Modern in London. The current presentation at the Musée d'art contemporain is his largest exhibition to date. *Geoffrey Farmer* is the latest in the Musée's ongoing series of shows focusing on the leading figures in Canadian art today, which has previously highlighted such Vancouver artists as Stan Douglas in 1996, Jeff Wall in 1999 and Rodney Graham in 2006-2007.

Catalogue

A catalogue providing an overview of the artist's work will be released in March, in order to include pieces produced specifically for this exhibition. It will contain essays by the show's curator Pierre Landry, by Jessica Morgan, curator at the Tate Modern in London and by Scott Watson, director/curator of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and professor at the University of British Columbia, along with a biobibliography and reproductions of the works. This publication, made possible through the financial participation of RBC Foundation, will be available at the museum's Olivieri Bookstore or from your local bookseller.

Meet the artist

The artist will meet the public just before the opening, on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, at 5:30 p.m. in the exhibition galleries. The event is free of charge and will take place in English.

Point[s] of View Series

In conjunction with the exhibition, curator Pierre Landry will offer a public tour of the show on Wednesday, February 27 at 6 p.m. This free tour will be conducted in French.

Presentation of the exhibition Geoffrey Farmer has been made possible by generous support from BMO Financial Group. "Art has the power to transform how we perceive life, each other and ourselves," says Bernard Letendre, Vice-President, BMO Harris Private Banking, Québec. "From young, emerging talent to Geoffrey Farmer, one of Canada's most exciting contemporary artists, BMO is proud to help bring their voices to the public. We believe our partnership with the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal will enable Québec audiences to discover one of Canada's most innovative artists."

The Musée d'art contemporain is a provincially owned corporation funded by the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec. It receives additional funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts.

-30-

Source and information:

Danielle Legentil

Public Relations Coordinator

Tel.: (514) 847-6232

E-mail: danielle.legentil@macm.org