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Pomona College Museum of Art features new Multimedia Installation in “Project Series 39: Rachel Mayeri”

“Project Series 39: Rachel Mayeri Primate Cinema” will be on view from **October 31 through December 20, 2009**, at the Pomona College Museum of Art in Claremont. An opening reception will be held at the Museum on **Saturday, November 7 from 5-7 p.m.** Rachel Mayeri will present a public lecture about her work on **Tuesday, November 3 at 2:30 p.m.**

“Project Series 39” showcases Mayeri’s new multimedia installation for “Primate Cinema,” a video series begun in 2006 that deals with primates and their behavior. The exhibition also includes the first work in this series, *Baboons as Friends*, a two-channel video installation contrasting field footage of baboons with human actors reenacting the primate footage. Working at the intersection of art and science, Mayeri observes human nature through the lenses of media studies, primatology, video art and film history. She examines the cognitive processes involved in understanding an “other” perspective as a way of examining how human nature is represented.

Her project compellingly connects the social, emotional and political behaviors of human and nonhuman primates, highlighting the profound links between art and science, nature and culture, animal and human, and provides a unique and crucial perspective on creativity. Mayeri states that “as opportunities to study the unruly lives of nonhuman primates in the ‘wild’ continue to vanish, our imagination of our closest relatives may be all that we have left.”

The research and development of Mayeri’s project “Primate Cinema” coincides with a new global interest in the interdisciplinary field of animal studies. In the last several decades, scientists—primatologists, biologists, anthropologists, sociologists, etc.—have approached studies of human and nonhuman primates with new tools. The Human Genome Project has demonstrated how closely related humans are biologically to the simplest forms of animal life, and a heightened awareness of environmental crisis has brought increasing interest to a new consideration of animal and human relations, paving the way for recent exhibitions and symposia.

Among the recent examples are “Interspecies: Artists Collaborating with Animals,”

an exhibition, symposia and series of workshops in October 2009 at The Arts Catalyst in London that explored the current state of human and animal relationships and “Becoming Animal,” at MASS MOCA from May 2005 through February 2006, an exhibition of work by 13 artists that explored the closing gap between human and animal existence. Mayeri’s work was included in the “Interspecies” exhibition, and she has also organized other projects connected to this field of study. Most recently, Mayeri co-curated a project at the Sweeney Art Gallery at the University of California, Riverside, titled “Intelligent Design, Interspecies Art,” which presented 20 international artists’ takes on animals’ points of view.

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The Project Series, organized by Museum Curator Rebecca McGrew, presents Southern California artists in focused exhibitions. The purpose of the series is to bring to Pomona College art that is experimental and introduces new forms, techniques or concepts. During each exhibition, participating artists spend time on campus working with faculty and students in relevant disciplines. A catalogue accompanies each exhibition. The Project Series is supported in part by the Pasadena Art Alliance.

The Pomona College Museum of Art is located at 330 N. College Avenue, Claremont. The Museum is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Friday, from noon to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call: (909) 621-8283; email: jessica.wimbley@pomona.edu; or visit the museum’s Website at www.pomona.edu/museum.

The Pomona College Museum of Art houses a substantial permanent collection as well as serves as a gallery for the display of temporary exhibitions. Important holdings include the Kress Collection of 15th- and 16th-century Italian panel paintings; more than 5,000 examples of Pre-Columbian to 20th-century American Indian art and artifacts; and a large collection of American and European prints, drawings, and photographs, including works by Francisco de Goya, José Clemente Orozco and Rico Lebrun.

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