

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Williams College Museum of Art Presents
Tristin Lowe: Mocha Dick
March 13–August 8, 2010

Photos available upon request.

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Williamstown, Mass.– Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) presents ***Tristin Lowe: Mocha Dick***, a 52-foot-long, ghostly white sperm whale made out of industrial wool felt. ***Mocha Dick*** was inspired by the whale that once harassed sailing ships near Mocha Island in the South Pacific Ocean. Described as having flesh as “white as wool,” that same whale was also the basis for Herman Melville’s 1851 novel *Moby-Dick*. On Thursday, April 8 at 4:30 pm, the museum will be hosting a multidisciplinary discussion focusing on Tristin Lowe’s sculpture and Melville’s novel with a variety of faculty from Williams College and the Williams-Mystic Program. This is a free program and all are invited to attend. A full list of participants follows.

Sprawled across the museum’s largest gallery, ***Mocha Dick*** has the size and feel of an actual whale. Lowe achieves this effect through his use of industrial wool felt, which mimics the appearance of flesh. The wool is carefully stitched, pieced, and threaded together so that these constructed seams and zippers appear as harpoon-scars and squid-besieged gashes. The wool covers an armature and inflatable device that creates the look of muscular form. Lowe also

hand-attaches wool-crafted barnacles to the whale's side, which, in addition to the scars and gashes, give the whale an older, embattled aura. Lowe invites viewers to consider the magnificence of the whale, the legacy of whaling, the care of our environment, and how the epic leviathan continues to capture the imagination.

“The body and flesh of Mocha Dick remind us of an actual, physical landscape; the wool is almost like a topographical map,” explains Class of 1956 Director Lisa Corrin. “Herman Melville worked on *Moby-Dick* while living in Pittsfield in the shadow of Mount Greylock, which reminded him of the whale. This sculpture will remind our students and all of our visitors of the extraordinary literary and artistic legacy that has made our region so culturally significant. We are looking forward to the multidisciplinary programs, from the English Department to Environmental Studies and the Williams-Mystic Program, which will explore the many issues that this artwork inspires us to consider.”

This exhibition continues WCMA's year-long focus on art and landscape—landscape in all of its guises: as topography, sustainer of life, site of conservation activism, cultural icon, metaphor, and object of awe and reverence. ***Mocha Dick*** was originally shown in Philadelphia at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in May 2009. It will be on view at WCMA from March 13-August 8, 2010.

About the Artist

Tristin Lowe (b. 1966) is a multidisciplinary artist interested in using a range of materials toward unexpected ends. Lowe received his BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and studied at Parsons School of Design and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He has exhibited his work extensively in Philadelphia, including at Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Vox Populi, Girard College, The Rosenbach Museum and Library, The Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial, Basekamp, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, The Project Room, Abington Art Center, and Nexus Foundation for Today's Art. He has exhibited nationally and internationally at Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin; New Langton Arts, San Francisco; University of California, San Diego; Hudson D. Walker Gallery, Provincetown; Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia; and the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Switzerland. He has been awarded a Pew Fellowship, Provincetown Fine Art Work Center Fellowship, The Fabric Workshop and

Museum Residency, and Girard College Residency. He was co-founder and co-director of the non-profit gallery Blohard. Lowe's work is in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and The West Collection, as well as other private collections. He now lives and works in Philadelphia.

Related Program

The Whiteness of the Whale: A Multidisciplinary Discussion of *Moby-Dick*

Thursday, April 8

4:30 pm

Join faculty from across the disciplines at Williams and the Williams-Mystic Program for a discussion of Herman Melville's epic novel and Tristin Lowe's sculpture.

Participants include:

- **Mary K. Bercaw Edwards**, Associate Professor of English, University of Connecticut; Senior Lecturer in Literature of the Sea, Williams-Mystic Program, Mystic Seaport
- **James T. Carlton**, Professor of Marine Sciences, Williams College, and Director, Williams-Mystic, The Maritime Studies Program of Williams College and Mystic Seaport
- **Peter Erickson**, Visiting Professor of Humanities, Williams College
- **Glenn Gordinier**, Robert G. Albion Historian, Williams-Mystic Program, Mystic Seaport; Co-Director, The Munson Institute, Mystic Seaport
- **Richard J. King**, Lecturer in Literature of the Sea, Williams-Mystic Program, Mystic Seaport
- **Williams S. Lynn**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, Williams College
- **Shawn Rosenheim**, Professor of English, Williams College

About the Williams-Mystic Program

Williams-Mystic is the Maritime Studies Program of Williams College and the Mystic Seaport, which is the largest maritime museum in America. It is a one-semester interdisciplinary ocean and coastal studies program integrating marine science, maritime history, environmental policy, and literature of the sea. Based in Mystic, Connecticut, the courses are hands-on and discussion-based with an emphasis on original research to truly experience the world.

Williams College Museum of Art

The Williams College Museum of Art is located on Route 2 in Williamstown, Massachusetts. It is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 am to 5 pm, and

on Sunday from 1 to 5 pm. Admission is free and the museum is wheelchair accessible.

