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**PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release

**RODNEY GRAHAM**

at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

October 7, 2006 to January 7, 2007

Montréal, September 20, 2006. Get ready for a good ride! In a body of work that runs the range from pop culture to contemporary art, this artist uses installation, photography, music and film to explore—philosophically and sometimes ironically—psychoanalysis, literature, music and the history of art. The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents **Rodney Graham** from October 7, 2006 to January 7, 2007.

**“Brilliantly paradoxical work”**

Since the mid-1970s, Rodney Graham has re-examined some of the foundations of Western culture. As curator Josée Bélisle notes, his work is brilliantly paradoxical, based on a unique synthesis of rigour and melancholy, humour and erudition, coherence and eclecticism. Repetition, quotation, and cascading, nested images are among the formal, psychological and philosophical strategies that he uses. These strategies of appropriation and transformation contribute to the development of an art that is thoroughly original and highly personal, all the more so as the artist is often the featured player in his photographs and films. It is a powerful work imbued with multiple meanings.

**The exhibition**

The exhibition features 10 major works by the artist, nearly all of them produced in the last three years and presented here for the first time in Canada. Remarkably, Graham created four superb new installations just this year for the presentation at the museum. *Three Musicians (Members of the Early Music Group “Renaissance Fare” Performing Matteo of Perugia’s “Le Greygnour Bien” at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, Late September 1977)* reconstructs, in a photographic triptych, the fictional performance of the late fourteenth-century piece of music. *Lobbing Potatoes at a Gong* plunges us into the 1960s with a Fluxus-type performance. *Awakening* references a Chris Walter photograph of the group Black Sabbath, with Graham here taking the place of the tramp lying on a park bench. *Paradoxical Western Scene*, for its part, revolves around this major movie genre.

Graham also inserts himself in some famous scenes in art history, which he recreates in his own way. *The Glass of Beer*, 2005, quotes Andy Warhol’s famous silk-screened self-portraits and Manet’s *Le Bon Bock* (in turn inspired by Franz Hals). In *Allegory of Folly: Study for an Equestrian Monument in the Form of a Wind Vane*, 2005, the artist depicts himself as the philosopher Erasmus as painted by Hans Holbein the Younger. Here, however, the rider is mounted backward on a mechanical horse of the kind used for training, and totally engrossed in reading... the Vancouver phonebook. *Torqued Chandelier Release*, 2005, virtually a still life in motion, refers to an experiment with motion and gravity conducted by Isaac Newton. And in *Loudhailer*, Graham portrays an RCMP officer struggling with a megaphone.

In addition, the exhibition includes two works recently acquired by the museum—*How I Became a Ramblin' Man*, 1999, and *Screen Door*, 2005—in which Graham revisits some mythic emblems of the twentieth century: that of the western movie and its lone hero in *Ramblin' Man*, and Graceland, Elvis Presley's famous mansion, in *Screen Door*.

### **Rodney Graham**

Rodney Graham lives and works in Vancouver. He is from the same generation as Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace and Ken Lum. One of Canada's leading artists, Graham has represented the country at such major events as the 1992 Kassel Documenta, the 1997 Venice Biennale and the 2002 Biennale of Sydney. In 2002-2003, the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, K21 in Düsseldorf and [mac] galeries contemporaines des Musées de Marseille mounted a retrospective of his work. The current presentation *Rodney Graham* takes up where that major survey left off. Previously, the Musée showed *Vexation Island*, 1997, in the exhibition *Head Over Heels into the Millennium* in 1999-2000.

### **Catalogue**

A 100-page catalogue accompanies the exhibition. It includes an essay by the curator, Josée Bélisle, texts by the artist on his four new pieces, a biobibliography and reproductions of the works. It may be purchased for \$29.95 at the museum's Olivieri Bookstore or Librairie ABC Livres d'art, or from your local bookseller.

### **Rodney Graham Band Concert**

To mark the opening of the major exhibition *Rodney Graham*, the museum is presenting, in its Montréal début and for one evening only, the Rodney Graham Band of Vancouver, on **Thursday, October 5, 2006, at 8 p.m.** The artist is backed by David Carswell on guitar, Beez on bass, Pete Bourne on drums and Paddy Ryan on keyboard, playing Pop/Rock music. Admission: \$18 adults / \$14 students. Tickets on sale at the museum's front desk and by telephone at: 514-847-6226.

### **Point[s] of View Series**

In conjunction with the exhibition, curator Josée Bélisle will take visitors on a tour of the show on Wednesday, October 18, 2006 at 6 p.m.

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