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WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY'S
EZRA AND CECILE ZILKHA GALLERY PRESENTS
ALFREDO JAAR

INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ARTIST AND MACARTHUR FELLOW
BRINGS THREE MAJOR WORKS TO WESLEYAN

ALFREDO JAAR

September 14 – December 2, 2007

Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University

283 Washington Terrace

Middletown, CT

Middletown, Conn., August 1, 2007— Since Alfredo Jaar first came to international attention in the 1986 Venice Biennale, he has consistently explored issues of displacement, the imbalance of power between industrialized and developing nations and the effects of military conflict on human life. This internationally acclaimed artist and MacArthur Fellow has done several bodies of work—drawn from events in Africa—that engage with these issues and reflect his ongoing examination of the dichotomy between the authority of the image and its failure to fully convey an event. The Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery at Wesleyan University presents three major works *The Sound of Silence* (2006), *Muxima* (2005) and *Untitled (Newsweek)* (1994), which are each informed by these concerns.

The exhibition opens on Friday, September 14 and runs through Sunday, December 2. The public is invited to attend the opening reception on Friday, September 14 from 5–7pm with a gallery talk at 5:30pm. Gallery Hours are: Tuesday–Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, noon–4pm; Friday noon–8pm. The gallery will be closed November 20–25 for Thanksgiving break.

On Saturday, November 3 at 11am in the Center for the Arts Cinema (283 Washington Terrace, Middletown), Alfredo Jaar will present a multi-media talk about his recent work titled *It is Difficult*, which includes a discussion of the three works that comprise the Zilkha Gallery exhibition. As the title of his lecture suggests, his exhibitions “force us to look at events we would rather not see” by drawing attention to poverty, economic exploitation, global injustice, and genocide.

About the Work

Muxima (meaning “heart” in Kimbundu, an indigenous language of Angola), Jaar’s first film, is a cinematic elegy dedicated to the people of Angola. “During the process of organizing my

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extensive collection of Angolan recordings,” comments Jaar, “I discovered that I had in my possession six different versions of a song called Muxima. And a film was born” — a film that poetically portrays the evolving history of Angola through alternate interpretations of this single folk song. The film is rooted in Jaar’s love of African music and the belief that music can resonate with and therefore help communicate the experiences of the people. *Muxima* is included in the 2007 Venice Biennale.

The Sound of Silence (2006), a haunting multi-media video installation, confronts the often-tortured relationship between public media and private ethics. The subject is a heartrending, Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph shot in the Sudan and the controversy it ignited. It is simultaneously a song of lamentation for South African photographer Kevin Carter, a committed witness to others' suffering, who took his own life in the wake of public criticism.

The third work *Untitled (Newsweek)* (1994) is a straightforward digital photo installation that addresses media coverage of the Rwandan genocide. It deftly demonstrates the power of a single media giant to define what is newsworthy and thus, to shape public opinion. It also underscores mainstream media’s interest in presenting news that is more commercially viable. The 17 digital prints of *Newsweek* covers, whose subjects run the gamut from "Men, Women and Computers" to "America's Cup: Playing Host to the World" to three devoted to O.J. Simpson, are installed chronologically from left to right. Five months after the massacres began, with a death toll approaching one million, the Rwandan genocide appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* for the first time.

Alfredo Jaar was born in Santiago, Chile in 1956. He currently lives and works in New York City. His work has been shown extensively around the world. He has participated in the Venice, São Paulo, Johannesburg, Sydney, Istanbul and Kwangju Biennales and in Documenta in Kassel. Major solo exhibitions have been presented at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, the Whitechapel in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Pergamon Museum in Berlin and the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1985 and was named a MacArthur Fellow in the year 2000.

For more information on Alfredo Jaar, visit: <http://www.alfredojaar.net/>

Alfredo Jaar is curated by Zilkha’s curator of exhibitions, Nina Felshin.

Image Caption: Alfredo Jaar, *Muxima*, 2005

The Center for the Arts is an 11-building complex on the Wesleyan campus that houses the departments of art and art history, music, theater and dance as well as film studies events and classes. The CFA includes the 400-seat Theater, the 260-seat Cinema, World Music Hall (a non-Western performance space), the 414-seat Crowell Concert Hall and the Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery.

Admission to *Alfredo Jaar* is free and open to the public. For more information or directions, call 860-685-3355 or visit www.wesleyan.edu/cfa.

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