



# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**New Exhibition Explores Serious Side of Play**  
***Deep Play: Joyful Revelry and Subversive Whimsy in the MAM Collections***  
**Exhibition on View: December 7, 2007 – March 22, 2008**  
**Artist's Talk with Patricia Thornton: Thursday, December 20, 7pm**

Missoula, MT / November 7, 2007 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / MAM's new exhibition is serious fun. *Deep Play: Joyful Revelry and Subversive Whimsy in the MAM Collection* opens December 7, 2007 through March 22, 2008. The exhibit surveys art that uses the signs, symbols, and strategies of play. Some artworks are lively, colorful, and exuberant; others are daring, dark, and defiant. The diverse selection of work was guided by naturalist Diane Ackerman's theory that humans seek out play's risk and ritual to gain creative insight and transcend the real world.

The exhibit was inspired by a new acquisition to the MAM Collection titled *Teddy*, a drawing gifted by artist Patricia Thornton (Missoula, MT). Thornton's psychologically-charged teddy bear, flanked by squirrely and kittenish creatures, exemplifies the playful noir captured by many of the artists in the exhibit. "The great thing about playing as an adult is that I don't have the fears, worries, and jealousies I did when I was young," Thornton says. Even in the face of hardship, she has learned to laugh at herself: "Which in my opinion is playfulness at its best," she says. Thornton will present a free artist's talk at MAM's Artini Thursday, December 20 at 7pm.

The exhibit features 36 works from MAM's permanent collections, which includes the Contemporary American Indian Art Collection and Missoula County Art Collection. Photographs, prints, paintings, sculptures, and moving images explore a range of playful memories, fantasies, facts, and fictions. More than twenty regionally- and nationally-known artists are represented, emphasizing the mission of the MAM Collections: *to promote outstanding contemporary art by artists whose work is relevant to the culture of the American West, with an emphasis on Montana artists.* Some of the artists included are: Holly Andres (Portland, OR), Joe Batt (Olympia, WA), Stephanie Frostad (Missoula, MT), Dirk Lee (Missoula, MT), Marvin Messing (Kalispell, MT), Francis Pearson (Milltown, MT), Lorna Simpson (Brooklyn, NY), and John Smart (Helena, MT).

Images of the artworks are available for publication and artists may be available for interviews. Please contact MAM for assistance.

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**About MAM:** FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. MAM educates, challenges and inspires the community through contemporary art. MAM preserves our emerging cultural heritage through the development and conservation of its art collection. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Tues-Sat, 11AM-5PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.