



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The Wide Open September 5, 2008 - January 10, 2009

Opening Reception and Gallery Talk by Dick Dolan, American Prairie Foundation:
September 5, 5-8 pm

Authors Readings, Artini: October 16, 7 pm

Artists Reception and Gallery Talk with Lois Conner and Geoffrey James: October
22, 6-8 pm

Montana Festival of the Book Reception: October 25, 4 pm

The Wide Open is an exhibition featuring three of the most accomplished contemporary photographers working today: Lee Friedlander, Lois Conner, and Geoffrey James. The works in this exhibition comprise the artists' interpretations of the high plains of northeastern Montana where the American Prairie Reserve is being created to restore and preserve the wide open for generations to come. To honor and draw attention to the mammoth undertaking of the American Prairie Foundation, renowned photographer Lee Friedlander was invited to create his vision of the vastness of the high plains. While best known for his portraits, nudes, still lifes, and studies of people at work, Friedlander has been making personal expeditions to the West for twenty years. At his suggestion, two additional photographers with years of experience picturing the western landscape were also invited to Montana to work on the project. Geoffrey James, one of Canada's most eloquent photographers, is presently celebrated in a retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada. Lois Conner's panoramic photos, taken with a century-old large-format camera, are perfectly suited to capture the sweeping vistas of the prairie.

The black & white images in the exhibition are compiled with the work of 22 prominent writers in a volume entitled *The Wide Open: Prose, Poetry and Photographs of the Prairie*, edited by Annick Smith and Susan O'Connor and published by The University of Nebraska Press. The three portfolios of photographs selected for the book by Ian Glennie and Fredericka Hunter comprise the core of the exhibition, which is coordinated to correspond with the release of the book and the Montana Festival of the Book. The Festival of the Book will celebrate the book and the American Prairie Project with a panel discussion and reading culminating with a reception at MAM on Saturday, October 25.

The editors, writers, poets, and photographers all contributed freely to make the book. Proceeds are in support of the American Prairie Foundation, a non-profit group dedicated to preserving the wild grassland prairie of eastern Montana. The book is available at the MAM bookstore for \$39.95 (MAM members receive a 10% discount).

This exhibition is made possible in part with a grant from the Prop Foundation. Additional sponsorship provided by the American Prairie Foundation and the University of Nebraska Press.

Contact: For more information please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406.728.0447, visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org, or contact Stephen Glueckert, Exhibitions Curators, stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406.728.0447 x226.

- END -

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-Fri, 11AM-5PM, Sat, 10AM-5PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.

MAM / 335 North Pattee, Missoula, MT 59802 / t: 406.728.0447 / missoulaartmuseum.org / museum@missoulaartmuseum.org