



ELI AND EDYTHE **BROAD ART MUSEUM** MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Broad Art Museum at MSU Presents Exhibition Documenting the Human Effects of Climate Change

***Gideon Mendel: Drowning World* Premieres New Series of Large-Scale Works Created from Personal Effects Gathered from Flooded Landscapes Across the Globe Alongside “Submerged Portrait” Photographs and Video Work**

East Lansing, MI—April 14, 2016 – The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (Broad MSU) presents an exhibition featuring photographs and video by internationally renowned photographer Gideon Mendel, *Gideon Mendel: Drowning World*. An expansion of a series Mendel has been developing for nearly a decade, the exhibition documents the global magnitude of climate change through the immediate experiences of individuals, including portraits of flood survivors within the remains of their homes or other submerged landscapes central to their livelihood. Working in photography and video, Mendel’s practice invites reflection on our relationship with the natural world, our attachments to physical objects and belongings, and shared experiences across geographical and cultural divides.

On view May 13 – October 16, 2016, *Gideon Mendel: Drowning World* includes works created during travel within Thailand, Nigeria, Germany, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, India, Brazil, and the United States. A single-channel video entitled “Water Chapters” adds dimension to the still portraits and chronicles the daily routines of individuals amidst flood waters. The 35-minute work features eight “Chapters” on subjects from each country visited.

The Broad MSU exhibition will also premiere works in Mendel’s new “Watermarks” series, which chronicles the dramatic modifications floodwaters have on personal photographs. Mendel has created large-scale prints of these small, individual objects, reflecting the magnitude of the collective effects of climate change on individual and communal memory.

“Mendel’s powerful work uncovers the very personal effects of flood events around the globe, humanizing many of the statistics related to these disasters. His portraits push the boundaries of the form, utilizing subjects and settings more closely associated with documentary photography,” said Caitlín Doherty, curator of the exhibition and Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Broad MSU. “For this exhibition, Mendel has created new, large-scale prints that further emphasize both the personal and the global ramifications of climate change, confronting us with familiar images dramatically altered by natural forces. Central to our mission at the Broad MSU is provoking dialogues across international borders, and we’re very proud to present Mendel’s work which creates such human connections within this context.”



From the home of Comrade Abdul Rashid (2), Bemina, Srinagar, Kashmir, India, October 2014.
Courtesy the artist.

Mendel's photo and video works will be accompanied by a presentation of the original found family snapshots that inspired the "Watermark" series, scattered across a platform and recalling how the objects were discovered in each home. The enlarged prints of each snapshot, nearly four feet in length, amplify the viewer's ability to examine the water's effects on each part of the photograph.

Gideon Mendel: Drowning World joins other exhibitions at the Broad MSU examining works by living artists from the U.S. and around the globe who are confronting a range of political, economic, and social issues. On view through August 7 is *The Artist as Activist*, which features two of Bangladesh's foremost contemporary artists, Tayeba Begum Lipi and Mahbubur Rahman. *Sam Jury: To Be Here* will be on view May 13-November 27, 2016, and chronicles the daily lives of exiled Sahrawi refugees near Tindouf, Algeria in a multi-channel video and sound installation.

Gideon Mendel: Drowning World is organized by the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University and curated by Caitlín Doherty, Curator and Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs. Support for this exhibition is provided by the Broad MSU's general exhibitions fund.

Gideon Mendel (born 1959, Johannesburg, South Africa) began photographing in the 1980s during the final years of apartheid. It was his work as a 'struggle photographer' at this time that first brought his work to global attention. Mendel's work is featured in the public collections of The International Centre of Photography, The South African National Gallery, and Johannesburg Art Gallery. He has had solo exhibitions Plymouth Arts Centre, UK (2015), Gallery MOMO, Johannesburg (2014), Tiwani Contemporary, UK (2013), Somerset House East Wing Gallery, UK (2012), The Lianzhou Foto Festival in China, and Fotofestival Naarden in Holland, has participated in notable group exhibitions including *Forecast* at the Anderson Gallery at Virginia Commonwealth University (2014), and *Lost World: Video Art by Charles Lim and Gideon Mendel* at The Freer and Sackler Gallery (2014), The ICP Triennial, and the ICP's touring *Rise and Fall of Apartheid* exhibition. Widely recognized for his long-term commitment to projects that respond to global social issues, Mendel has produced a number of photographic advocacy projects working with charities and campaigning organizations including The Global Fund, Médecins Sans Frontières, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, UNICEF, and Concern Worldwide. Amongst many accolades, Mendel has won the Eugene Smith Award for Humanist Photography, six World Press Photo Awards, first prize in the Pictures of the Year competition, a POY Canon Photo Essayist Award, the Amnesty International Media Award for Photojournalism, and was shortlisted for the Prix Pictet Prize 2015 for *Drowning World*. Most recently, he was awarded the Pollock-Krasner Foundation's inaugural prize for Creativity (2016).

Caitlín Doherty, Curator and Broad MSU Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs

Caitlín Doherty was appointed Curator and Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs at Broad MSU in spring 2015. A respected international curator, scholar, and director, Doherty has engaged with artists, students, and members of local communities across the globe.

From 2012 – 2015, she served as Exhibitions and Speaker Curator at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar (VCUQatar), where she organized major exhibitions of international contemporary art and design, including *Confluence: Photographic-based work from the contemporary Middle East* (2014); *The Depths of Hope* (2014), by Egyptian-Sudanese artist Fathi Hassan; *Equilibrium* (2012), by Irish sculptor John O'Connor; and *The UP Factory* (2012), an interdisciplinary exhibition by Amsterdam-based international design company DROOG. Doherty also curated VCUQatar's Crossing Boundaries Lecture Series, featuring renowned contemporary artists, designers, and leaders within the artistic community including Ellen Lupton, Joachim Sauter, Francesco Bonami, Shirin Neshat, Marina Abramović, and Richard Serra.

From 2006 – 2008 Doherty worked as Director of Lismore Castle Arts, one of Ireland's leading contemporary art galleries, where she oversaw exhibitions featuring artists such as Michael Craig-Martin,

Matthew Barney, Richard Long, and Nathalie Djurberg. She taught art history, design history, and museum and gallery studies at Waterford Institute of Technology from 2008 – 2010. In Ireland, Doherty also directed the interdisciplinary arts and cultural initiative Artswave, and acted as Visual Arts Coordinator for Garter Lane Arts Centre in Waterford. She has published and lectured on contemporary art and museum practice, and holds degrees in art history and museum and gallery studies from The University of Edinburgh and The University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University

The Broad Art Museum at MSU serves as a teaching institution and a cultural hub for the University, the community of East Lansing, and the broader Michigan region. Dedicated to international contemporary art as a way of questioning and understanding a variety of cultural and social issues, the Museum organizes original and traveling exhibitions and performances, and acts as a laboratory for new creative expression. A collecting institution with holdings from ancient cultures through the contemporary art of today, the Broad MSU draws upon its collection and the multidisciplinary resources across the University for its exhibition and educational programming for visitors, students, and faculty. The Museum opened in November 2012 within its dynamic Zaha Hadid-designed building and is named in honor of Eli and Edythe Broad, long-time supporters of the university whose lead gift established the Museum.

www.broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Michigan State University

Michigan State University has been working to advance the common good in uncommon ways for more than 150 years. One of the top research universities in the world, MSU focuses its vast resources on creating solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges, while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community through more than 200 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

###

For media inside Michigan, please contact:

Whitney Stoepel
Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum
Michigan State University
(517) 884-3909
stoepelw@msu.edu

For media outside Michigan, please contact:

Isabel Sinistore
Resnicow and Associates
(212) 671-5175
isinistore@resnicow.com

Stephanie Yeo
Resnicow and Associates
(212) 671-5161
syeo@resnicow.com