FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21c Museum Durham and the North Carolina Museum of Art Organize Major Solo Exhibition of Contemporary Sculptor Wim Botha

Wim Botha: Still Life with Discontent Opens on April 13, 2019



Wim Botha, *Still Life with Water*, 2015, wood, bronze, oil paint, glass, and fluorescent lights, dimensions variable, 21c Museum Collection, © 2015 Wim Botha; Photograph: Mario Todeschini

Durham and Raleigh, North Carolina (November 16, 2018)—In April 2019, 21c Museum Durham and the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) in Raleigh will present South African artist Wim Botha's first solo museum exhibition in the U.S., *Wim Botha: Still Life with Discontent*. Featuring works that span Botha's career, the cross-institutional exhibition will provide visitors with varied experiences of the artist's work and a new site-specific installation at each venue. Co-curated by 21c Chief Curator and Museum Director **Alice Gray Stites** and NCMA Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art **Jennifer Dasal**, *Wim Botha: Still Life with Discontent* examines Botha's multimedia practice and his use of diverse materials to question and subvert aesthetic conventions of power and value.

As part of the opening celebration, 21c and the NCMA will host a series of events open to the public, including an artist-led tour of the exhibition at 21c Durham and a conversation between the artist and

curators at the NCMA, with more events to be announced. This marks the second collaboration between the two institutions, following the traveling exhibition *Alter Ego: Anthony Goicolea, A Decade of Work* in 2011–12. A full-color exhibition catalogue, with essays by Elizabeth Perrill, South African contemporary art specialist and professor at UNC–Greensboro, and 21c's Alice Gray Stites, and an interview with the artist conducted by the NCMA's Jennifer Dasal, accompanies the exhibition.

Botha's work blurs, deconstructs, or fractures historically significant examples of Greek, Roman, Renaissance, and baroque art to subvert sculptural traditions. Botha lets his process guide the form his works take and often combines unusual and disparate materials including polystyrene, fluorescent lights, marble, wood, bronze, and books, to question the hierarchy of art history and the preciousness of typical materials. Botha's sculpted portraits portray complex human forms conjured from his memories; the resulting faces are in some ways mangled, abject, or broken, yet simultaneously beautiful. "Beauty is a difficult concept," Botha observes, "because it sits so close to ugliness; pleasure and pain are very closely related."

The title of the exhibition, *Still Life with Discontent,* pays homage to the artist's interests, practice, and perspective. "Repetitively interrogating the symbols and sources of religious, cultural, and political power, his works reflect the anxiety of influence while resisting fixed interpretation," says 21c's Alice Gray Stites. "To be discontent is to critique content and to empty out that content from its traditional conventions, so that art can tell a multiplicity of stories."

Reflecting a shared commitment to exhibiting compelling, dynamic works by living artists, the NCMA and 21c Durham are thrilled to present the first solo museum presentation of the artist's work in the United States. *Wim Botha: Still Life with Discontent* results from a mutual belief in the value of collaboration and in the transformative power of art that questions itself, its maker, and audience.

"We are elated to collaborate with the NCMA again, this time to present the work of Wim Botha," says Alice Gray Stites, 21c's chief curator and museum director. "This exhibition will provide a unique experience for audiences who plan to attend the shows at both the NCMA and 21c. While each can be viewed and enjoyed separately, there's a tremendous synergy between the exhibitions in both museums, and we encourage viewers to take advantage of the opportunity to view Botha in both settings. We look forward to sharing the exquisite work of Wim Botha."

"We are so pleased to be able to bring attention to an acclaimed artist little-known in the U.S.," says Jennifer Dasal, the NCMA's curator of modern and contemporary art. "Wim Botha's work is fascinating, challenging, and pertinent to our times, and to be able to bring his work to a wider and more diverse audience, while partnering with 21c Museum Hotels, is a privilege."

Wim Botha: Still Life with Discontent
Opens at 21c Museum Durham and the North Carolina Museum of Art on Saturday, April 13, 2019

ABOUT WIM BOTHA

Botha was born in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1974. He graduated from the University of Pretoria with a BA (Visual Art) in 1996. He lives in Cape Town. He has received a number of awards, including the Helgaard Steyn Prize for sculpture in 2013, the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 2005, and the first Tollman Award in 2003. Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at the Norval Foundation (2018); Galerie Hans Meyer (2017); Feldbusch Wiesner Rudolph (2017); Fondation Blachère in Apt, France (2016); Galerie Jette Rudolph,

Berlin (2015); the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown (2014); Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria (2013), and the Sasol Art Museum, Stellenbosch, as the Stellenbosch University Wordfest Artist for 2013.

Notable group exhibitions include *The Divine Comedy: Heaven, purgatory and hell revisited by contemporary African artists* at MMK (Museum für Moderne Kunst), Frankfurt, Germany, traveling to other venues (2014–15); *Lichtspiele* at Museum Biedermann, Donaueschingen, Germany (2014); *Imaginary Fact: South African Art and the Archive,* the South African Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013); *The Rainbow Nation,* Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague (2012); the Göteborg Biennial, Sweden (2011); *Memories of the Future: The Olbricht Collection,* La Maison Rouge, Paris (2011); the 11th Triennale für Kleinplastik, Fellbach, Germany (2010); *Peekaboo: Current South Africa,* Tennis Palace Art Museum, Helsinki (2010); *Olvida Quien Soy—Erase me from who I am,* Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (2006); the seventh edition of Dak'Art, the Dakar Biennale (2006); and the touring exhibition *Africa Remix* (2004–07).

ABOUT 21c MUSEUM HOTELS

A multi-venue contemporary art museum with eight locations across the U.S., 21c Museum is one of the largest contemporary art museums in the U.S., and North America's only collecting museum dedicated solely to art of the 21st century. It was founded in 2006 by Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson, philanthropists, preservationists, and contemporary art collectors, who were inspired by the idea that art can spur urban revitalization and catalyze civic connection. Envisioning a new way to expand access to contemporary art in urban centers, they created 21c Museum Hotels, which seamlessly combine a fully functioning contemporary art museum with boutique hotels and chef-driven restaurants.

From rotating, curated exhibitions to site-specific installations and cultural programming, 21c creates innovative cultural centers for experiencing thought provoking contemporary art from all over the world. Open and accessible 24/7, 21c's exhibitions and programs are free to public. 21c presents a range of arts programming curated by Museum Director, Chief Curator Alice Gray Stites. 21c collaborates on arts initiatives with artists and organizations worldwide. 21c Museum Hotels are located in Louisville, Ky.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Bentonville, Ark.; Durham, N.C.; Lexington, Ky., Oklahoma City, Okla.; Nashville, Tenn.; and Kansas City, Mo.

For more information visit **21cMuseumHotels.com**.

ABOUT THE NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. The North Carolina Museum of Art is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Roy Cooper, governor, and an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Susi Hamilton, secretary.

For more information visit ncartmuseum.org.

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