

Corin Hewitt to Debut *Shadows Are To Shade* in June 2019
Two-Part Exhibition Located in his Family Home/Studio and at the ICA at VCU

Artist Excavates Home to Juxtapose Family's Daily Life with that of Original Landowner in Richmond's Historic Fan District

Richmond, Virginia – April 10, 2019 – On June 15, 2019, the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) will present *Shadows Are To Shade*, a new project by Richmond-based artist and VCUarts faculty member Corin Hewitt. Presented in two concurrent parts—a simulated archaeological dig in Hewitt's home and studio and an immersive installation in the distinctive Steven Holl-designed galleries of the Markel Center—the exhibition will invite visitors to encounter real and fabricated findings from the artist's excavation of his property in Richmond's historic Fan District, the neighborhood immediately adjacent to VCU. Combining the methods and language of archaeological inquiry with domestic life, Hewitt examines our relationship to material culture, family narratives, labor, and Richmond's history. *Shadows Are To Shade* will be on view through September 1, 2019.

"While grounded in one place and its specific histories of life and labor, *Shadows Are To Shade* unfolds into what we might think of as alternate universes that Corin Hewitt reveals through excavation, layering, and doubling across the two presentation sites," said Stephanie Smith, the ICA's Chief Curator. "It's an ambitious work. As a new institution still exploring how best to connect with our communities, we are proud to produce this project with an internationally known artist, VCUarts colleague, and neighbor."

"Hewitt's home/studio excavations will provide the public with the rare opportunity to experience the transformation of a private space into a living artwork, adding to the arts ecology of the city and contributing to a long history of American artists of the 1970s and 80s that have converted private production spaces into sites for exhibitions," said Amber Esseiva, assistant curator at the ICA.

Described by Hewitt as a "parafiction," the project conflates his family's daily life in his current home with his research on the last recorded landowner, a family who operated a city-block-sized farm on the site prior to the extant building's construction in 1915. In his home, Hewitt has cut through the floor and into the soil, staging an installation in two parallel trenches that resemble archeological excavation sites, exposing sewer pipes, strata, and other objects of daily life, such as rings, cooking utensils, silver coins, crackers, plates, cosmetics, sunblock, eyeglasses, and archeological equipment, embedded at various levels in the ground. Hewitt also has installed an oscillating light above the trenches that casts shifting shadows. Through juxtaposing real and fabricated artifacts, Hewitt compares two distinct familial histories across time. The installation on the ground floor of his home and studio will be open to visitors for limited hours during the run of the exhibition.

Simultaneously, Hewitt will transform the distinctive "V"-shaped galleries on the second floor of the ICA into a pair of mirror-image installations. The immersive installations feature waist-high platforms and a series of walls made of earth-stained, translucent fabric stretched over wooden frames through which visitors will be encouraged to move. Connecting the exhibition's two locations, a two-channel video, displayed on desktop monitors, will capture the slow transit of light and shadow across the trenches in

his home. In the rear gallery of the exhibition, a separate two-channel live feed captures audio and video from the inside of the functional sewer of Hewitt's home, as well as its replica.

"Growing up in Vermont in a family where eight generations lived within sixty miles of each other, I think a lot about the complexities of place. After being in Richmond for nearly nine years, I decided to dig two holes in my floor. These trenches launch the beginning of using my home in Richmond and the ground beneath it as a focus for my work," Hewitt said of his motivations for the work.

Each half of the exhibition space will offer a set of layered encounters for visitors as they move into a landscape of raised platforms, translucent walls, shadows, scrim, sculptures, and video. The interplay between spaces blurs the line between public and private spaces and extends Hewitt's material and historical considerations across the two sites.

Shadows Are To Shade is the first phase of an ongoing project through which Hewitt will explore the lives of the twenty-six previous tenants who have lived in his home since 1915. Each project will result in an accompanying work that remains within the walls or under the floors of the home. As part of this slow transformation of his home into a permanent art installation, following the exhibition this summer, Hewitt will entomb the trench installations and bury instructions for how to activate the artwork again for future audiences. Hewitt joins a long history of artists transforming their homes and/or studios into immersive and evolving works of art. More information on the artist and the project is available at icavcu.org.

About the Artist

Corin Hewitt's installations, performances, sculptures, photographs, and videos investigate relationships within architecture and domestic life. He also often draws on past experience as an electrician and plumber — a laborer who works in often unseen and utilitarian spaces. Hewitt received his BA from Oberlin College and his MFA from Bard College. He is Associate Professor of Sculpture and Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Solo exhibitions of Hewitt's work include Whitney Museum of American Art, MOCA Cleveland, the Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center, the Seattle Museum of Art, Laurel Gitlen, New York, Taxter and Spengemann, NY, and Western Bridge, Seattle.

About the Institute for Contemporary Art

The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University is a non-collecting institution that showcases a fresh slate of changing exhibitions and programs. The ICA is a place to explore new ideas, providing an open forum for dialogue and collaboration across the region and the world. Mirroring the increasing emphasis on cross-disciplinary studies across VCU, the ICA has created a new environment for artists and scholars from around the world to test ideas. As a university-wide resource, the ICA links campus, community, and contemporary artists by supporting local creative communities, engaging an international network of contemporary artists and organizations, and encouraging collaborations with VCU departments, faculty, students, and the Richmond community. The ICA is a responsive institution that offers a broad range of artistic perspectives from across the world, questioning assumptions and encouraging critical discourse. Visit icavcu.org.

About VCU and VCU School of the Arts

VCU is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located in downtown Richmond, VCU enrolls more than 31,000 students in 217 degree and certificate programs in the arts, sciences, and humanities. One of the nation's leading schools of arts and design, VCU School of the Arts offers 15 undergraduate and 10 graduate degree programs in fine arts, design, performing arts, historical research, and pedagogical practice. Distinguished faculty members are internationally recognized in their respective fields, contribute significantly to the stature of VCU, and are committed to mentoring the next generation of artists, entrepreneurs, scientists, scholars, and engaged citizens of diverse communities around the world. Its campus in Qatar provides students and faculty with a direct tie to the Middle East and underscores the school and university's commitment to global education and experience.

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