

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
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PROJECTS: CARRIE MAE WEEMS

November 2, 1995 - January 2, 1996

A new installation by American artist Carrie Mae Weems (b. 1953) is the subject of the next **PROJECTS** exhibition, on view at The Museum of Modern Art from November 2, 1995, through January 2, 1996. Organized by Thomas W. Collins, Jr., Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Curatorial Fellow, Department of Photography, **PROJECTS: CARRIE MAE WEEMS** presents the artist's critical retelling of creation myth and the fall from grace of the first man and the first woman, narrated through photographs, texts, wallpaper, decorative objects, and African sculpture.

At heart a storyteller, Weems for the past two decades has created poetic ensembles of photographs and texts, drawing upon personal and family histories as well as African-American history and folklore. The artist's works inform and entertain, or provoke and challenge, through the deadpan presentation of insidious stereotypes of race, gender, and class. These poignant stories -- often skillful jokes -- lead the audience to a critical reflection upon the underlying social, political, and economic structures from which such stories are generated.

The work in **PROJECTS: CARRIE MAE WEEMS** signals the artist's departure from a preoccupation with the legacies of the North American slave trade that led to the creation of such notable bodies of work as *Untitled* (Sea Island series, 1991-93) and *Untitled* (Africa series, 1990-93).

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The focal point of the **PROJECTS** installation, *The Apple of Adam's Eye* (1993), is a dramatic painted and embroidered screen combining images and text, that announces the theme of gender differences and the power relationships that arise from it. Nearby, a series of black-and-white photographs of evocatively gendered African architectural forms and original texts anchor Weems' mythology firmly in the real world of human drives, desires, and social relations. In playful combination, altered photographs of male and female African fetishes dramatize and thus elaborate and extend the story. The tale is completed with decorated wallpaper and African sculptural objects.

Carrie Mae Weems was born in 1953 in Portland, Oregon. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the California Institute of Arts, Valencia (1981), a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, San Diego, (1984), and a Master of Arts in the Graduate Program in Folklore from the University of California, Berkeley (1987). Weems' work was recently represented in a traveling mid-career retrospective organized by The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; and at The Museum of Modern Art, it was included in the exhibition PLEASURES AND TERRORS OF DOMESTIC COMFORT (1991). The artist lives and works in New York.

The **PROJECTS** series is made possible by generous grants from the Lannan Foundation and from The Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

The next exhibition in the series is **PROJECTS: OLIVER HERRING/LEONILSON**, on view from January 18 through March 12, 1995.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.