

EXHIBITION PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Jean Perkins,
312.344.7779 or 312.663.5554

Antonia Contro and Maurizio Pellegrin, David Ireland, Clement Cooper
March 1, 2001 through April 28, 2001

CHICAGO: January 2001

From March 1 through April 28, 2001, The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, will present exhibitions by four prominent contemporary artists working with photography, Maurizio Pellegrin (Italy), Antonia Contro (United States), David Ireland (United States), and Clement Cooper (England).

Originally a painter, Chicago artist Antonia Contro creates intricate installations that explore themes of journey and transformation inspired by her own Venetian heritage. Using a SX-70 Polaroid camera, Contro creates both concrete and ethereal images of objects and landscapes, and combines them with other physical objects such as antique maps and written notes.

Maurizio Pellegrin's wall collage installation, "Cameras," incorporates old cameras, photo-related equipment, framed found photographs, a black curtain, and what appear to be framed images and objects completely wrapped in black cloth. The idea of an object or image protected and undisturbed conjures a sense of timelessness and sacredness. Although Pellegrin provides photographic paraphernalia as clues to what he is concealing, the viewer can only speculate as to what lies underneath.

Working together Contro and Pellegrin will install a site-specific installation reflecting their shared fascination with the idea of discovery. "Descry" is comprised of a small black structure that fits tightly within one of the museum's galleries, creating a room within a room. Dimly lit and containing a single photograph, the structure is suggestive of a camera obscura or a giant camera body, reminiscent of the technology, process and materials that stand behind photographic images. Contro and Pellegrin will conduct a gallery talk, free and open to the public, on Wednesday, February 28 at 4:00 pm in the museum as they complete the installation of "Descry." They will discuss the process of creating and mounting a site-specific collaborative installation as well as the commonality of their individual works.

Well known as a conceptual sculptor and installation artist who creates hybrids of salvaged objects and architectural materials, David Ireland began using photography in the mid-1990s to illustrate scenes from his various travels. For example, in "Blood Dots & Rain over Ireland," he transforms the photograph by using enamel paint to both obscure and frame detail. Ireland will present a gallery talk at the museum on Friday, March 16, 2001 at 6 pm.

Clement Cooper's "Primary" series is comprised of portraits of inner-city children of diverse and mixed races, photographed in primary schools in Birmingham, Preston, and

Manchester, England. Cooper presents the children in an unsentimental and dignified manner – a response to his aversion to advertising images that exploit children.

The exhibition's opening reception will take place on Thursday, March 1 from 5:30 pm – 8 pm in the galleries of The Museum of Contemporary Photography with a panel discussion, "Challenging the Canon: Black British Photographers" beginning at 6:30 pm. Mark Sealy, Executive Director of Autograph/the Association of Black Photographers, and David A. Bailey, independent curator and co-director of The African and Asian Visual Artists Archive, will be joined by Clement Cooper and moderator Dawoud Bey to discuss contemporary practices and critical histories of Black photographers in Britain and their influences worldwide.

The museum staff will offer a tour of the current exhibitions at 12:15 pm on March 28.

In conjunction with the Columbia College Photography Department, artist Tina Barney will speak on April 19 at 6:30 pm in the Hokin Auditorium at 623 South Wabash Avenue. Barney has photographed her family and friends in their intimate upper-class surroundings for over twenty years. Her scenes are devoid of obvious action, but full of details revealing the rituals of a privileged way of life. Although initially her large color photographs appear to be candid snapshots, in fact the situations are staged.

The Museum of Contemporary Photography will be open to the public between April 30th and May 8th 2001 during the installation of its next exhibitions. On view beginning May 9th will be works by Nikki S. Lee, Zwelethu Mthethwa, and Oliver Boberg. We hope to see you there.

The Museum of Contemporary Photography is free and open to the public weekdays from 10 until 5 pm (Thursdays until 8 pm) and Saturdays from 12 to 5 pm. This exhibition and panel discussion are principally supported by The Sara Lee Foundation. The exhibitions, presentations, and related programs are supported in part by grants from AOL Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust; The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Hotel accommodations are partially funded by the Hotel Allegro. The ongoing series of exhibition are principally sponsored by American Airlines, the official airlines of The Museum of Contemporary Photography.

The opening reception, exhibition and panel discussion are part of The Art of Columbia College Chicago, five days of arts and events beginning on February 28.