



Contact: Marla Loftus, Gibbes Museum of Art, 135 Meeting Street,
Charleston, SC 29401
(843)722.2706 x38
mloftus@gibbesmuseum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2009 (8:00 pm)

Additional High res images available upon request

Credit for attached image –

Untitled from the *Passage on the Underground Railroad Series, 2002*

By Stephen Marc (American, b. 1954)

Archival pigment inkjet print, 18 x 52 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Gibbes Museum of Art Announces Stephen Marc Winner of the 2009 Factor Prize for Southern Art

(Charleston, SC) – The Gibbes Museum of Art tonight announced that photographer and digital montage artist Stephen Marc of Tempe, Arizona has won the 2009 Elizabeth and Mallory Factor Prize for Southern Art and the \$10,000 cash prize that accompanies the award. The Factor Prize acknowledges an artist whose work demonstrates the highest level of artistic achievement in any media while contributing to a new understanding of art in the South. Artists were nominated for the Prize online at www.factorprize.org through January. In March, seven panelists narrowed the list to six finalists that included Marc, Lonnie Holley, Ross McElwee, Kathryn Refi, Edward Rice and Mike Smith.

Stephen Marc is recognized for his unique and powerful photographic montages that combine family snapshots, antique photographs and images from his own extensive body of photographic work to visually interpret American history focused on the black experience. His work combines contemporary images with those of historic artifacts that reconfigure time and space in an attempt to tell both his personal story and the story of a culture.

Marc's current project, *Passage on the Underground Railroad*, explores North America's Underground Railroad, which moved escaped slaves to freedom. While working on the series, Marc says "he became committed to learning about southern culture and heritage, from slavery through the civil rights struggle. My family connections to Mississippi and Arkansas play an important role in this interest." One of Marc's photographic montages from his *Underground Railroad Series* was featured in the 2008 Gibbes exhibition *Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art* and on the cover of the accompanying catalogue.

According to Angela Mack, Executive Director of the Gibbes Museum of Art, "the choice was extremely difficult due to the exceptional artistic abilities of all six Factor Prize finalists. We chose Stephen Marc because of his highly creative approach to blending historical materials and contemporary images to create a new southern narrative."

Stephen Marc

Marc received his BA from Pomona College in 1976 and his MFA from Tyler School of Art at Temple University in 1978. He resides in Tempe, Arizona, where he is a Professor of Art at Arizona State University. Marc's work has been featured in many exhibitions including *Constellation*, an invitational exhibition celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Center for Photography at Woodstock (where in 2001, Marc was Artist in Residence), and three exhibitions which were accompanied by book publications; *Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art; *Game Face: Women in Athletics* at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.; and *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers* at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for African History and Culture in Washington D.C.

Later this year, Marc's book *Passage on the Underground Railroad* will be published by University Press of Mississippi. The book will contain 87 digital photographic composites and will be accompanied by an interview conducted by Carla Williams along with essays by Dianne Miller (National Coordinator of the Network to Freedom division of the National Park Service) and University of Buffalo Professor Keith Griffler.

The 2010 Factor Prize Award

Nominations for the 2010 award are accepted throughout the year on the factorpize.org website. The site not only serves as a nomination point for artists but it is also an archive of information about Southern artists that can be used by curators, collectors, academicians and the public.

GIBBES MUSEUM OF ART

Established as the Carolina Art Association in 1858, the Gibbes Museum of Art opened its doors to the public in 1905. Located in Charleston's historic district, the Gibbes houses a premier collection of over 10,000 works, principally American with a Charleston or Southern connection and presents a series of special exhibitions annually. In addition, the museum offers an extensive complement of public programming and educational outreach initiatives. As the aesthetic heart of the Lowcountry, the Gibbes serves the community by stimulating creative expression, increasing economic vitality through tourism, and improving the region's superb quality of life.

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