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**SFMOMA PRESENTS NEW WORK: EDGAR ARCENEAUX**

From August 12 through November 27, 2005, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present the exhibition *New Work: Edgar Arceneaux*, a solo presentation of works by Los Angeles-based artist Edgar Arceneaux. Described by *The New York Times* as an “exciting combination of superb draftsman and subtle conceptualist,” Arceneaux creates works that explore his interest in language and science and that establish unexpected connections—between words, objects, places, and people. At once precise and offhand, his mixed-media installations link seemingly disparate subjects within a network of associations—often based on clever wordplay—that bridges ideas across eras and cultures.

Organized by SFMOMA curatorial associate Jill Dawsey, this focused presentation, part of SFMOMA’s *New Work* series, features selections from the artist’s recent project *Borrowed Sun*, his most ambitious body of work to date. Here Arceneaux invokes jazz musician Sun Ra, conceptual artist Sol LeWitt, and seventeenth-century physicist Galileo and sets them loosely in orbit around the theme of the Earth’s sun, juxtaposing representative elements of each and toying with newfound associations. The room-size installation incorporates various media—graphite drawings on vellum, a large-scale concrete sculpture, slides, and a film—that synthesize and overlap to cumulative effect. This shifting landscape of image and idea operates on multiple levels of meaning, forming both an elaborate meditation on the way the mind assimilates information and an investigation of the connections between artistic process, philosophy, science, and pop culture.

According to Dawsey, “Arceneaux’s art is in many ways indebted to that of Marcel Duchamp in its use of wordplay and metaphor. Arceneaux is also inspired by a wide array of sources, from the literature of Jorge Louis Borges and James Baldwin, to the philosophy of Plato and Descartes, to the music of Thelonius Monk. This diversity of influences and ideas offers myriad points of entry for viewers.”

*Borrowed Sun* is undertaken in a spirit both open-ended and deliberate. It charts accidental relationships between figures and ideas without assigning narrative or value judgment yet still pursues the possibility of representing moments of revelation. In this way, Arceneaux blurs the line between intention and chance, fostering a tension between the two that creates subtle instability, playfully stranding image and meaning without resolve.



*Place Is the Space*, 2004; gold paint and ink on paper; 67 x 60 in.; © Edgar Arceneaux

SFMOMA's presentation will include *Blocking Out the Sun* (2004), a slide projection showing the sun completely eclipsed by the artist's outstretched thumb, referencing Galileo's method for astronomical observation and suggesting the body's smallness in comparison to the cosmos. A wall-size graphite drawing, *Cycle a Single Moment* (2004), is based on a series of drawings made by Galileo in 1612 that map the movements of what are now known as sunspots. Proof during Galileo's day that the sun rotated on its own axis, the sunspot diagram, as Arceneaux reinvents it, alludes to the theme of cycles and circular events that threads the entire installation.

To create the exhibition's centerpiece, a large concrete sculpture titled *Broken Sol* (2004), Arceneaux exactly reproduces a chalk drawing by Sol LeWitt (whose first name means "sun" in Spanish) on a wall of stacked cinder blocks. The artist then subverts LeWitt's strict mathematical logic by randomly rearranging the bricks. A film depicting the making of the piece is projected on one side of the wall; on the other side we see the scrambled LeWitt drawing. Light from the film projects through cracks in the wall onto Arceneaux's "sunspot" drawing.

The exhibition also features a portrait of twentieth-century American jazz icon Sun Ra who claimed Saturn as his birth planet and was preoccupied with intergalactic travel as the subject of both his Afro-Egyptian philosophies and his virtuosic compositions. Titled *The Immeasurable Equation* (2004), the large drawing shows Sun Ra softly depicted in Arceneaux's light-handed graphite markings on frosted vellum, giving the figure a transparent quality as if it were somehow spectral or incomplete. In another work, the text-based drawing *Place Is the Space* (2004), whose title refers to that of a 1974 film about Sun Ra, Arceneaux reverses the order of the words and intersperses them with the line "Can You Feel It?"—song lyrics taken from Michael Jackson. In both drawings Arceneaux playfully addresses the high/low culture debate and inserts black musical tradition into the typically white tradition of conceptual art.

*New Work: Edgar Arceneaux* will be installed on the fifth floor in conjunction with *Between Art and Life: The Contemporary Painting and Sculpture Collection*, a presentation of post-1960 contemporary art from the Museum's collection, and coincides with the installation of a Sol LeWitt wall drawing on the same floor.

On Thursday, October 27 at 6:30 p.m., SFMOMA's Education Department will present a talk with Arceneaux and exhibition curator Dawsey, in discussion about the evolution of the artist's work. An illustrated brochure, with an essay by Dawsey, will be available in the galleries at no cost.

The *New Work* series is generously supported by Collectors Forum, an auxiliary of SFMOMA and the founding patron of the series. Major funding is also provided by Mimi and Peter Haas, Nancy and Steven Oliver, Robin Wright, and the Betlach Family Foundation.

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**Museum hours:** Open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas.

**Koret Visitor Education Center:** Open daily (except Wed.) 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thurs. until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

**Admission prices:** Adults \$10; seniors \$7; students \$6. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

**Visit our Web site at [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org) or call 415.357.4000 for more information.**

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