

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bonnie Franklin: bfrankli@ramapo.edu or Rosa Diaz-Mulryan: rmulryan@ramapo.edu

October 19, 2005

***MASTER BLASTER*, RAMAPO CURATORIAL PRIZE EXHIBITION,
FEATURED AT RAMAPO COLLEGE**

(Mahwah) – *Master Blaster*, an exhibit in which artists use humor and noise to puncture art world dogma and deflate figures of cultural authority, will open in the Kresge Gallery at Ramapo College of New Jersey on Wednesday, November 9 and continue through December 16. An opening reception will be held from 5 – 7 p.m. on November 9. Curator Stacey Allan will give a talk at 6 p.m.

Allan is the 2004 recipient of the Ramapo Curatorial Prize, co-administered with the Center for Curatorial Studies graduate program at Bard College. Explaining the concept for the exhibition Allan says, “the word blast has a number of definitions, many of them slang: a loud or angry outburst, an enjoyable occasion of fun and laughter, to subject somebody or something to great criticism or to play loudly. Within this one word, a relationship is established between sound, humor and resistance in which pleasure becomes an effective vehicle for critical content.”

Alex Bag, Louise Lawler, Le Tigre, David Burrows and Bob and Roberta Smith, the artists included in *Master Blaster*, use raucous videos, performances and installations to confront the complex institutional framework that builds canons, appoints masters and authorizes certain artistic voices, while suppressing or invalidating others. The artists, notes Allan, take aim at the high-profile individuals and institutions that are prominent within contemporary artistic discourse. They add names and deflate myths, conferring value to marginalized figures and diminishing the status of established ones. The curator

(more)

believes the works prompt viewers to consider how history appoints dominant artistic voices and who decides what works of art are fit for canonization and continued study.

Louise Lawler's audio-recording "Birdcalls" (1972-81) employs the artist's voice to sing, squawk and chatter the blue-chip names of twenty-eight male artists as though they were unique species of birds.

The feminist electronic punk band Le Tigre honors the artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, athletes, activists and thinkers who have inspired them with their 1999 song "Hot Topic." The song is an upbeat radical roll call of names that are important to feminist, gay and lesbian histories, but often overlooked within mainstream discourse.

British artist Bob and Roberta Smith offers a mixed media installation "The Poisoned Glade of Anti-Social Aesthetic" (2004) that includes hand-lettered, misspelled signs and clumsy drawings that insult artistic, musical and political icons. In collaboration with David Burrows, Smith's 2001 "Staff Development (Le École de Bob Smith et David Burrows)" looks to the art school as the institution that produces language and demands belief in this dominant canon.

Alex Bag portrays an undergraduate student at New York's School of Visual Arts in her video "Untitled Fall '95" (1995). In it, the student assesses her art school education through a series of confessional segments recorded at the end of each fictional semester.

This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Kresge Gallery is located in the Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts at Ramapo College. Gallery hours are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 1 to 5 p.m. and Wednesday, 1 to 7 p.m. For more information, call 201.684.7147.

###