

PRESS RELEASE

Barry McGee & Margaret Kilgallen

23 November 2001 – 28 February 2002

The Deste Foundation is pleased to present *Holdfast*, an impressive collaborative painting installation by Barry McGee and Margaret Kilgallen which will take up its entire exhibition space.

Barry McGee belongs to the new generation of emerging Californian artists. His work references a variety of sources, from Mexican murals and street art to the graffiti artists of the '70s and '80s and the San Francisco beatnik poets. McGee has devised a playful, colourful and at the same time poetic language which is direct and immediately recognisable. His work draws from street culture and at the same time expresses the artist's sympathy for those marginalised by contemporary society. As he himself says "I try to capture the multitude of stimuli and the overload of the senses that one might feel walking down the street of any one of our fine American cities". And explains: "the motion and gesture in both graffiti and drawing are major elements in my work... I like the experience of tangible, specific reality – of a real space in real time. I also like the traces left by human presence in a space at some specific time, and the way they are recorded in memory".

Although some themes are often repeated and parts of his huge mural installations are painted in a graffiti-like casual fashion, McGee's works are in no way naive nor are they executed with the speed characteristic of this genre. On the contrary, the finish of his works is refined, detailed and consistent. Barry McGee participated in the 2001 Venice Biennial with a work entitled *Street Market*, a large reproduction of an open-air market created in collaboration with artists Stephen Powers and Todd James. McGee has also exhibited at the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). Margaret Kilgallen, who passed away just five months ago aged 34, was a leading figure in the community of street artists, surfers, skateboarders and musicians in San Francisco. Her work draws from graphic design for advertising and store signs, wall paintings and street art, underground comics and beatnik poetry. Often she used collages of words and images to produce a rhythmic visual narrative. In her works one can discern the artist's contemporary spirit but also her nostalgia for a world where experiences were unmediated rather than consumed second-hand through television and computers. Margaret Kilgallen's work was included in the exhibition *East Meets West* at the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art. She also exhibited at the Drawing Centre in New York and the UCLA Hammer Museum in California. Margaret Kilgallen also created a number of installations for public spaces in the USA and Brazil.

Barry McGee and Margaret Kilgallen were a couple and many of their works were created jointly. *Holdfast* is part of the Dakis Joannou Collection. Its installation at the Deste Foundation's Centre for Contemporary Art will be site specific and carried out by McGee himself.

Opening hours: Monday-Friday 11:00 - 24:00, Saturday: 12:00 – 16:00

For more information please contact the Press Officer Mr. Fivos Sakalis on 6729460