DeCordova Announces the 12th Recipient of the Rappaport Prize: Orly Genger

Lincoln, MA, October 6, 2011—DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum is pleased to announce Orly Genger as the 12th recipient of the prestigious Rappaport Prize, which annually awards $25,000 to a contemporary artist with a relationship to New England. The Rappaport Prize is both the longest-standing New England art prize as well as one of the largest awards of its kind in the region. Last year deCordova’s Director Dennis Kois announced that the Rappaport Foundation endowed the Rappaport Prize in perpetuity, providing annual recognition and support for outstanding New England artists for decades to come.

“We are pleased that deCordova continues to push the envelope by encouraging artistic expression through the use of challenging materials and scale by recognizing artists such as Orly Genger with the Rappaport Prize,” says Phyllis Rappaport. “We welcome Orly to the outstanding community of Prize winners over the last eleven years including Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Ursula von Rydingsvard, and last year’s recipient Liza Johnson.”

About the Winning Artist

Using the vernacular techniques of crocheting, knitting, and knotting, the 12th Rappaport Prize winner, Orly Genger, creates monumental sculptures with rope—transforming this workday material into powerful yet pliable installations. Genger’s work typically takes the form of abstract cubes, columns, and piles in monochromatic colors. With rope, Genger transforms these rigid shapes into something soft, almost wearable in some instances, injecting a human-ness into monumental sculpture. In this way she addresses, extends, and transforms the recent history of abstract sculpture dominated by prominent male artists like Donald Judd, Tony Smith, and Richard Serra.

Genger’s work retains a reductive, abstract vocabulary along the lines of mid-century Minimalist art that was typically made and manufactured out of machined metal. With industrial rope, she both hints at and departs from that legacy, by injecting an organic softness into these large shapes as well as her own bodily labor into the process. Genger’s practice requires her to wrestle with enormous amount of heavy fishing or climbing rope, and is inherently physical and labor intensive. The end result of the materials and scale
makes clear this effort and reasserts the body—that of the artist’s—into abstract sculpture.

“I am extremely grateful to the Rappaports and to the Museum for honoring me with this prize. I feel fortunate to have my name be in the company of previous winners. My work demands a limitless and unrelenting dedication to hard work. This is made possible by your support—not only financially, but emotionally. It is at moments like these where I am fueled to keep going on a journey that sometimes seems impossible. For this, I am so grateful.”

“Orly Genger’s objects and installations are breathtaking in their sheer size and ambition, and blur distinctions between object and installation, art and architecture, and space and place in fascinating ways,” says Nick Capasso, deCordova’s Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs. “We are thrilled to award the Rappaport Prize to Orly, whose career we have closely followed for several years. She brings a real vitality to contemporary sculpture with her innovative approaches to form, process, and labor.”

Orly Genger was born in New York City in 1979. She received her BA from Brown University in 2001 and attended The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2002. She has since had solo exhibitions at The Aldrich Contemporary Arts Museum, the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Her work has also been included in exhibitions at MASS MoCA and MCA Denver. Genger has been featured in Sculpture Magazine, Art in America, Modern Painters, ArtNews, The Village Voice, and The New York Times, among others.

About the Rappaport Prize

Since its inception in 2000, the Rappaport Prize has been, foremost, an investment in both an individual and in the broader community. Founded and funded by the Phyllis and Jerome Lyle Rappaport Foundation, the Rappaport Prize follows the Foundation’s mission of promoting leadership in public policy, medical research, and art. Administered by deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, the Rappaport Prize fulfills deCordova’s mission of supporting significant artists while educating the public about developments in American contemporary art.

Each prize is given to celebrate the achievement and potential of an artist who has already demonstrated significant creativity and vision and encourage the artist to continue in a career of innovative art making. Together, deCordova and the Rappaport Foundation hope to create a community of accomplished artists whose careers have been enhanced by the recognition of the Rappaport Prize. In 2010, the Rappaport Foundation endowed the prize in perpetuity, ensuring the continuation of this prize for years to come.
Rappaport Prize Lecture: Orly Genger
Thursday, March 29th, 6:30 pm
Tower Auditorium at MassArt

Join artist Orly Genger and the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum community in this evening lecture at the Tower Auditorium at MassArt. Genger is the 2011 recipient of deCordova’s prestigious Rappaport Prize, an annual award given out to an established contemporary artist with ties to the New England area. Genger is the 12th recipient of the prize.

About deCordova

Established in 1950, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum is the largest park of its kind in New England encompassing 35 acres, 20 miles northwest of Boston. In 2009, deCordova changed its name from deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park to deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum to emphasize its renewed focus on sculpture and to support the institution’s goal of becoming the leading Sculpture Park in the United States by 2020. Providing a constantly changing landscape of large-scale, outdoor, modern and contemporary sculpture and site-specific installations, the Sculpture Park hosts a range of unique and site-specific artworks, the majority of which are on loan to the Museum. Inside, the Museum features a robust slate of rotating exhibitions and innovative interpretive programming.

In 2009 deCordova acquired its first work by an international sculptor and continues to bolster the curatorial program by exhibiting high-quality, accessible art of nationally and internationally recognized artists indoors and out. Currently, visitors can view work by Antony Gormley, Roy Lichtenstein, Sol LeWitt, Chakaia Booker, and Rona Pondick along with 60 other well-known artists. To maintain its commitment to New England artists and emphasize the quality and vitality of the art created in this region, deCordova launched the deCordova Biennial in 2010 and the PLATFORM series in 2009.

Patrons of deCordova can enjoy year-round activities in the Sculpture Park and Museum, including snowshoe tours, yoga in the park, birding tours, curator and artist conversations, and many special talks, screenings, and events. DeCordova’s School offers classes and workshops throughout the year and is one of the largest non-degree granting studio art programs in New England. Unique to deCordova, the Corporate Program provides area businesses the opportunity to support the institution and regional artists through membership initiatives and Art Loan options. DeCordova is also home to the only preschool embedded in a contemporary art museum in the United States.

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General Information

DeCordova is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm and on select Monday holidays. General admission during Museum hours is $12 for adults; $8 for senior citizens, students, and youth ages 6–12. Children ages 5 and under, Lincoln residents, and Active Duty Military Personnel and their dependents are admitted free. The Sculpture Park is open year-round during daylight hours. Guided public tours of the Museum’s main galleries take place every Thursday at 1 pm and Sunday at 2 pm. Tours of the Sculpture Park are given on Saturday and Sunday at 1 pm from April to November. All guided tours are free with Campus admission. Visit decordova.org or call 781.259.8355 for further information.

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