DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DeCordova presents RUBBERS: Martha Friedman

Lincoln, MA, July 15, 2010 – DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum is pleased to announce RUBBERS: Martha Friedman, September 18, 2010–January 9, 2011, the first Northeast museum exhibition of the artist’s work.

In her sculptures, Brooklyn-based artist Martha Friedman depicts tricks and balancing acts, while arguing for the possible sexual connotation of everything. Referencing the history of sculpture from high modernist abstraction to minimalism to the Duchampian ready-made, Friedman is interested in locating “the point in which common objects slip into abstraction or eroticism.” As a result, food, which is so deeply connected to the body, emerges as one of her subjects as do quotidian objects such as rubber bands, chairs, and gourds in large conglomerations that are beautiful, witty, and often elicit visual/verbal double-entendres. RUBBERS will feature a group of Friedman’s new cast rubber sculpture and related photographs.

“Friedman’s sculptures engage the history of art, head on, but then, with the slightest gesture, upend everything we think we know,” says deCordova’s Associate Curator of Contemporary Art Dina Deitsch. “She is one of the most exciting young sculptors today, tackling the very history of her medium.”

The show’s starting point is Rubbers, 2008, a floor-to-ceiling installation of a forest of rubber band columns. Each column is composed of two over-scaled rubber rings tied together at a central knot. The effect is fun, elegant, and disorienting, referencing in equal measure a funhouse and classical—similarly modernist—architecture. It encapsulates Friedman’s central themes of duality and ambiguity, as well as her interest in formal balance and suspension. The tension in the stretched bands prompts the audience to wonder whether the columns are holding the room together or are in the process of tearing it apart. Viewers are invited to move through the narrow grid of columns, spaced just wide enough for a single figure. In the flesh-like texture of the rubber and the physical experience of brushing up against these sculptures, Rubbers, evokes the body in material, experience, and, finally, in its tongue-in-cheek title.

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Color photographs of the giant rubber bands will accompany this installation. Referencing intestines, the photographs, such as Rubber Ring Yellow, 2009, further underscore Friedman’s interests in the parallels between the body and the everyday object. They are cast in the bright palette of everyday bands—blues, pinks, and yellows—in sly homage to the all-over compositions of such masters as Pollock and de Kooning.

The photographs create a clear link to Friedman’s newest works, all of which center on the food stuffs of olives and meat—specifically that of cow’s tongue, a delicatessen favorite. At deCordova, Friedman will present a new body of work, Ladies Room, that follows these ingredients from their solid to processed forms as lunch meat in a characteristic handling of sculptural balance, abstraction, and, of course, their implied sexual connotations. The cast rubber olive appears in various erotic compositions—in one case speared by an enormous toothpick and in another, delicately licked and suspended by two sculptures of enormous tongues. It is then fully united with its beef counterpoint as a large, floppy slice of deli meat in a group of rubber wall panels that rival any abstract painting. In all, Friedman absorbs the lessons of twentieth century sculpture—of realism, abstraction, and most importantly, surrealism—and much like lunch meat, stirs and processes it into something new, wonderful, and tasty.

RUBBERS is accompanied by a brochure and is organized by Dina Deitsch, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art.

About the Artist
Martha Friedman was born in Detroit in 1975. She holds a BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Yale University School of Art. Past gallery exhibitions include The Station, curated by Nate Lowman and Shamim M. Momin, Miami, FL; Bunch Alliance and Dissolve, Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, OH; The Organization of Batter at Wallspace Gallery, New York, NY. Friedman has also exhibited at Shane Campbell Gallery Chicago, IL; Taxter & Spengemann, New York, NY; John Connelly Presents, New York, NY; Koelnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany; Public Art Fund at Metrotech, Metrotech Center, Brooklyn, NY; Triple Candie, New York, NY; among others.

Educational Programming
All programs are free with Museum admission.

Artist Talk: Martha Friedman  
Saturday, November 6, 3 pm

Curator Talk: Associate Curator Dina Deitsch  
Sunday, November 14, 2 pm

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Eye Wonder: Guest Artist Martha Friedman
Sunday, November 7, 1-3 pm

Process Gallery
Explore *Martha Friedman: Rubbers* in a whole new way in this behind-the-scenes, hands-on interactive activities, touchable materials samples, and lots and lots of rubber! See how the artist made her giant rubber cow tongue, learn about Friedman’s casting process, and discover what her rubber materials feel like in this interactive gallery.

**About deCordova**
DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum was established in 1950 to educate the public about American contemporary art. DeCordova’s unique campus features both indoor and outdoor venues, allowing its visitors to celebrate and explore contemporary art across 35 acres. Inside, the Museum features a robust slate of rotating exhibitions and innovative interpretive programming. Outside, deCordova’s Sculpture Park hosts more than 60 works, the majority of which are on loan to the Museum. DeCordova also offers the largest non-degree granting studio art program in New England. DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum attracts more than 100,000 visitors from New England and tourists from around the world to its campus each year and enrolls more than 3,000 students of all ages in its studio art program.

**General Information**
DeCordova is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm and on selected Monday holidays. General admission during Museum hours is $12 for adults; $8 for senior citizens, students, and youth ages 6-12. Children age 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 October. All guided tours are free with Campus admission. Visit www.decordova.org or call 781.259.8355 for further information.

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