FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susie Stockwell, External Affairs Coordinator
sstockwell@decordova.org, 781.259.3620

The fifth exhibition in deCordova’s PLATFORM series opens November 13
PLATFORM 5: Bartow + Metzgar
Stratimentation: Investigations of a Metamorphic Landscape

Lincoln, MA, October 26, 2010 – Over the past year deCordova’s Sculpture Park has been home to the Morphology Field Station for Sensing Place, a two-person structure built and manned by artists Paul Bartow and Richard Metzgar for their ongoing research into deCordova’s site. On November 13 the artists will unveil their findings in a large-scale installation in the Museum—the fifth exhibition in deCordova’s PLATFORM series and the first in a series of projects in which artists work directly with the Permanent Collection.

Bartow + Metzgar’s collaborative art practice is an experimental engagement with the environment. The artists research specific sites as a way to understand the complex relationships among cultural, historical, geological, and microbiological information that cumulatively define our experiences of a particular place. They utilize radical geography, interventionist strategies, and information systems in a collective practice that includes the two artists and a host of scientists, mycologists, artists, and even museum visitors. In doing so, they propose an equally radically new way to produce, and perhaps, understand information as art.

The Morphology Field Station for Sensing Place was designed with all of these concerns in mind. Covered in cedar shingles, this small outpost references regional New England architecture and similarly reflects the particularities of its locale: the building’s unique form roughly mimics the 35-acre Park’s topography, the irregular footprint follows the property lines, and its green color is pulled from the hue of Google Earth’s satellite imagery of the area. Over the course of their residency, Bartow + Metzgar have conducted field research on site using their versions of core sampling, specimen photography, and drawing. The Field Station will be moved indoors, along with the multi-layered archive that Bartow + Metzgar amassed over the past year with the help of their collaborators.

-more-
For PLATFORM 5, the Museum’s Dewey Family Gallery will be transformed into a living archive and reinterpretation of the Museum’s physical, historical, geological, and conceptual landscape. The installation is titled *Stratimentation: Investigations of a Metamorphic Landscape*, a fabricated, composite term that hints at the layered and changing notions of time that can co-exist in a single place: historical, geological, and biological time are all compressed and stratified in a given site in the simplest forms of people, rocks, and plants. In Bartow + Metzgar’s hands, these layers unfold in virtual and physical space.

Joining the *Field Station* in the gallery will be hundreds of images, natural specimen collections, drawings, and videos collected by the artists over the course of their year-long residency at deCordova. Alongside the collections, Bartow + Metzgar have included selections from the Museum’s permanent collection as an expression of the interconnected relationship between land, time, and culture inherent in our site as art museum and park. Furthermore, the artists used a series of visually-derived systems pulled from the site itself (from the drawings and maps of the Park) to dictate their findings—from the rock samples to the artwork. In doing so, they have removed themselves from the process, allowing for surprising relationships to emerge and opening up the possibilities for a different experience of an environment.

Dina Deitsch, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art noted, “This is the first time that artists have directly curated our Permanent Collection, and definitely the first time anyone has done so using chance! It has been an exciting experience to see Rick and Paul connect all the different aspects of deCordova—from the permanent collection to the park to even the students in the school—with such elegance and intellect. As a PLATFORM project, *Stratimentation* underscores the ability of the museum as not only a site for displaying art but that of producing art as well.”

Bartow + Metzgar used material like the property line, specific species of flora and fauna, the sculptures, and even visitors from deCordova’s site to develop visual systems and create new forms of maps and images of the site. For instance, at the start of the project, the artists used the Park map to create a web of lines or vectors by connecting sculptures that consist of the same materials like bronze or wood. This network of lines informed the 21 locations on deCordova’s landscape that they studied over the last year. The artists also used this pattern to select the 10 objects from the Museum’s permanent collection to install in the gallery along with documentation of the project’s findings. The lines were overlaid onto a sheet of paper filled with accession numbers to choose the 10 works at random. Using chance within a predetermined system, that in itself is somewhat illogical or perhaps only logical within an internal system, the artists developed a way in which to understand and approach a site through means beyond direct reason and thus beyond our own preconceived notions. In doing so, they open up a way to experience a site in a new way.

-more-
Follow Bartow + Metzgar’s research progress on their blog at:

Educational Programming

As part of the programming for PLATFORM 5: Bartow + Metzgar, visitors will be able to take a hands-on approach to the artists’ creative practice. A table outlining the map of deCordova’s grounds and the collection points used to gather all the data for the exhibition will be installed in the Dewey Family Gallery complete with materials highlighting the artistic process appropriate for a variety of ages. Designed to be part of the installation itself, this experience is meant to aide the visitor in deciphering the complex and layered process that makes up PLATFORM 5: Bartow + Metzgar.

About the Artists

Paul Bartow (b. 1964, Phillipsburg, NJ) received his MFA in painting from Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY, and a Masters in Architecture from the University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, and is based in Watkins Glen, NY. Richard Metzgar (b. 1962, Lewisburg, PA) received a BA in architecture from Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY and an MFA in painting from the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY. He teaches at the State University of New York, Oswego in Oswego, NY. Bartow + Metzgar have had recent exhibitions at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, NY; Locust Projects, Miami, FL; Action Art Actuel, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, Canada; Evergreen House, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD; among others. Bartow and Metzgar are also members of the art/architecture collective spurse.

The 2009-2010 PLATFORM series is funded in part by James and Audrey Foster. PLATFORM 5: Bartow + Metzgar will be accompanied by a brochure and is organized by Dina Deitsch, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art.

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.

-more-
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 November. All guided tours are free with Campus admission. Visit www.decordova.org or call 781.259.8355 for further information.

###