

For Immediate Release

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DeCordova announces the Rappaport Endowment Fund and
the winner of the 11th Rappaport Prize

Lincoln, MA, September 30, 2010—At its Fall Meeting, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum announced both a major gift from the Phyllis and Jerome Lyle Rappaport Foundation to endow the Rappaport Prize in perpetuity, as well as the 2010 winner of the Rappaport Prize.

The prestigious Rappaport Prize, which annually awards \$25,000 to a contemporary artist with a relationship to New England, is both the longest-standing New England art prize as well as one of the largest awards of its kind in the region. "Creative artists enrich our lives in New England and are part of the magnet that attract and keep our creative workforce in this region," Jerry Rappaport said. "Phyllis and I are pleased in endowing the Rappaport Prize to permanently provide annual recognition and support for these outstanding and creative artists." Foundation Chair Phyllis Rappaport added, "Since deCordova has from its inception had a unique focus on art in New England we believe that they will continue to maintain the standards of the Rappaport Art Prize. Our greatest hope is to celebrate an important artist, generate excitement for their art and perspective, and provide some financial support to advance their careers to newer heights." DeCordova Director Dennis Kois announced that the Rappaport Foundation has made a transformative gift. After a decade of awarding the Rappaport Prize to deserving artists, the endowment fund will allow deCordova to support the best of New England's artists for decades to come.

Kois noted about the endowment, "The generous gift endowing the Rappaport Prize speaks to deCordova's role as the only institution in New England that supports the region's art in a broad sense—via the deCordova Biennial, a growing collection of New England art, exhibition opportunities for regional artists, and through publication and scholarship. The Rappaport Prize is the capstone of all these efforts, and we could not be more grateful to the Rappaport Foundation for their vote of confidence for deCordova's support of New England's art and artists."

Kois went on to announce that the 11th recipient of the Rappaport Prize is artist, writer, and filmmaker Liza Johnson. According to Dina Deitsch, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at deCordova, "Liza is a rare artist that manages to combine incredible artistic skill with a profound concern and awareness of social inequalities to produce touching yet powerful works of art."

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DeCordova is particularly excited to support this artist because the funding will directly support her current project. "I'm so flattered and honored that you've invited me to receive the Rappaport Prize," Johnson exclaimed in an acceptance video played at the announcement. "I'm grateful to the Foundation and to the Museum, and hearing I won the Prize is perfect timing. This year is my sabbatical from Williams College, so I have a big slate of new work and a feature film [Return] that I'm working on. It makes a concrete, material difference to have the support as I go into a year where I can do that." Samples of Johnson's work can be viewed at decordova.org/rappaportprize/2010/.

About the Winning Artist

Contemporary artist and filmmaker Liza Johnson creates narrative shorts and experimental videos that bridge the gap between art and cinema, documentary and narrative, and gallery and public art. With a background in fine art and cinema, Johnson's work inhabits a unique position between the two, ultimately extending the boundaries of both media. She combines public art and video installation with documentary, narrative, and abstract film to create what she terms "critical realism." In her recent work, she collaborated with participants to produce a film that is also a collectively formed public art project.

In *South of Ten*, Johnson's 2007 portrayal of the post-Katrina gulf coast, the artist worked with non-professional actors to develop a nuanced vision of the area's residents. The participants in the film act the events of their everyday life in a mode beyond direct interviewing and documentation. "For me," Johnson said of the process, "it's interesting to try to find ways that the same kind of important witnesses or players can testify to their experiences, but in some of the other registers that film and video make possible—for example, the physical, the kinesthetic." In 2009, Johnson released another collaborative film called *In the Air*. The film focuses on adolescents in a circus school in a dead-end Ohio county. It received the Vienna Short film award in 2010 and was nominated for Best Short Film at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Johnson's first feature-length film, currently in production, is called *Return* and dramatizes the return of a female soldier to her economically depressed hometown, meditating on the themes of economic depression and the psychological impact of a given environment.

Liza Johnson (b. 1970) received her B.A. from Williams College and her M.F.A. from the University of California at San Diego. She is now an associate professor of art at Williams College. She has exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; as well as New York, Berlin, and Rotterdam Film Festivals. She has been a fellow of the DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm and the

Sundance Institute, and has published many articles on art and film. Johnson has also curated museum exhibitions at the Anthology Film Archives and at the Asia Society Museum in New York.

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 contemporary American 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, the deCordova and Rappaport Foundation hope to create a community of accomplished artists whose careers have been enhanced by the recognition of the Rappaport Prize.

[Click here](#) to view Prize criteria and more information. (PDF)

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.