

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Anonymous: Contemporary Tibetan Art opens at The Dorsky Museum on July 20**

The Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at the State University of New York, New Paltz is pleased to present **Anonymous**, an exhibition of contemporary Tibetan art featuring over 50 works of painting, sculpture, installation, and video art by 27 artists living in Tibet and in diaspora. Realized by guest curator Rachel Perera Weingeist, Senior Advisor to the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, the exhibition is largely drawn from the Rubins' private collection. Many works will be on view to the public for the first time, some made exclusively for the exhibition. Beginning July 20, the show will be open through December 15. A public opening will be held Saturday, July 20, from 5-7 p.m.

**Anonymous** seeks to explore the tension between an ancient culture's unbroken artistic tradition and the personality-driven world of contemporary art. Anonymity and self-expression are commonly polarized values and artistic goals within the global art market. In traditional Tibetan art, a formal system of art production was used to support the transmission of Buddhist culture. In the present atmosphere however, art is becoming a vital medium of self-expression for Tibetans—increasingly, artists are creating work focused on the individual. A cautious 21st century visual language steeped in irony, metaphor, and allusion has fully emerged.

As Weingeist explains, "It is only roughly in the last ten years that a contemporary Tibetan visual culture has galvanized. Concepts of anonymity, authorship and self-representation are still very much in flux. By and large there is trepidation and reserved acceptance of this new introspective visual culture." **Anonymous** is a petri dish for exploring these developments. A surprisingly large number of the works submitted for the exhibition—over 15 pieces—are self-portraits; remarkable for a culture with scant tradition of art expressing individuality, let alone self-representation. Dynamic juxtapositions of color and texture, life-size compositions, precise attention to detail, and a humorous use of pop culture imagery, exemplify the simultaneously intellectual and playful visual language of contemporary Tibetan art.

Video art plays a pivotal role in the exhibition, giving viewers access to rarely seen expressions of Tibetan life and culture. A curatorial panel culled works from an extended international open call for video submissions from the Tibetan community. The premise and promise of anonymity allowed for artists a more open expression and the presentation of otherwise inaccessible imagery. Together the videos not only provide a glimpse at oft-censored imagery but also exemplify the varied roles of self-expression in contemporary Tibetan culture. In addition to the contemporary display, a small selection of traditional thangka paintings will provide historical context.

The inclusion of work from artists from around the globe—Dharamsala, Kathmandu, Lhasa, New York City, Oakland, Thimphu, Zurich and the Australian Outback—provides for a range of perspectives. Firmly established as well as emerging artists are featured. Benchung, Losang Gyatso, Marie-Dolma Chopel, Tsewang Tashi, Nortse, Gade, Phurba Namgay, Jhamsang, Rabkar Wangchuk, Dedron, Palden Weinreb, Tulku Jamyang, Tsering Nyandak, Karma Phuntsok, Sherab Gyaltsen, and others, including anonymous contributors, are included in the exhibition.

**Anonymous** will serve as a catalyst for a series of public programs, artist talks, academic symposia, and educational offerings at the Dorsky and throughout the SUNY New Paltz community. A number of Tibetan artists will lead public lectures and participate in educational programming. Coinciding with the opening, artist Tsherin Sherpa, based in Oakland, California, will spend ten days on site constructing, from found objects, a site-specific self-portrait. Zurich-based artist, Kesang Lamdark, son of a Rinpoche, will spend a period in residence at the University, following a term at the Vermont Studio Center, where a number of Tibetan artists have participated as Rubin Fellows. As part of the SUNY New Paltz distinguished speaker series, Columbia University professor Robert Thurman will present a lecture Oct. 21.

Published in conjunction with ArtAsiaPacific, a 200-page, full-color, catalogue will accompany the exhibition, with contributions by exhibition curator Rachel Perera Weingeist, cultural historian, writer, and curator David Elliott, activist and writer, Jamyang Norbu, and Tom Finklepearl, Director of the Queens Museum in New York City. Additionally, artists Tenzing Rigdol, Tsherin Sherpa, and Penba Wangdu will each contribute essays sharing personal insight into their own artistic practice.

Funding for Anonymous and related programs is provided by the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, Friends of the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, and the State University of New York at New Paltz. Additional funding for the exhibition catalogue is provided by the Fleming Museum of Art, University of Vermont; Arthur A. Anderson; and Jim and Mary Ottaway.

## **ABOUT THE MUSEUM**

The Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, located at SUNY New Paltz, is fast gaining wide recognition as the premier public showplace for exhibition, education, and cultural scholarship about the Hudson Valley region's art and artists from yesterday and today. With more than 9,000 square feet of exhibition space distributed over six galleries, the Dorsky Museum is one of the largest museums within the SUNY system. The Dorsky was officially dedicated on Oct. 20, 2001. Since then it has presented over one hundred exhibitions, including commissions, collection-based projects, and in-depth studies of artists including Robert Morris, Alice Neel, Judy Pfaff, and Carolee Schneemann.

For more information about The Dorsky Museum and its programs, visit <http://www.newpaltz.edu/museum>, or call (845) 257-3844.



## **THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT NEW PALTZ**

Located in the heart of a dynamic college town, ninety minutes from metropolitan New York City, the State University of New York at New Paltz is a highly selective college of about 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students. One of the most well-regarded public colleges in the nation, New Paltz delivers an extraordinary number of majors in Business, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Engineering, Fine & Performing Arts and Education.

New Paltz embraces its culture as a community where talented and independent-minded people from around the world create close personal links with real scholars and artists who love to teach.