

MASS MoCA

ARTIST MARC SWANSON CONFRONTS LOSS IN MOST AMBITIOUS INSTALLATION TO DATE

**A Memorial to Ice at the Dead Deer Disco on view at MASS MoCA
From March 12, 2022 through December 2022**

North Adams, Massachusetts – February 2, 2022 – The Massachusetts Museum of Art (MASS MoCA) has announced the artist Marc Swanson’s most ambitious installation to date. *A Memorial to Ice at the Dead Deer Disco* addresses the impending losses resulting from climate change, and the frustrating inability to change or control this outcome. Through the use of theatricality, taxidermy mounts, video, light animations, and shrouded sculptures, *A Memorial to Ice at The Dead Deer Disco* makes palpable our inability to control human nature and asks us to both recognize this loss and to celebrate our present. Curated by senior curator and director of exhibitions Denise Markonish, *A Memorial to Ice at the Dead Deer Disco* will be on view at MASS MoCA from March 12, 2022 through December 2022.

For Swanson, mourning is tied to how we live in the ruins of our future, a time we will not experience directly, yet still approach with nostalgia. Rather than dwelling in the past or present, we instead project a bleak future which could have been avoided, but now comes with uncontrollable consequences. Inspired by the two places Swanson has felt the most free - nature and the dance club - this exhibition looks at the idea of mourning and memorial related to both spaces especially in wake of climate change and in reference to the AIDS crisis. Despite feeling the freest in the nightclubs of his youth and in the woods today, both places are and were sites of threat. Through an immersive installation inspired by dioramas and nature displays, old Hollywood glamour, queer culture and camp, gravestones and memorial monuments, Swanson transports the visitor into a hybrid landscape nightclub, which is both a memorial and a monument to the disappearances and loss around us.

A Memorial to Ice at The Dead Deer Disco also draws inspiration from the 19th Century Hudson River School painter Thomas Cole, who often wrote about the negative effects of development along the Catskill Mountains in New York, where Swanson now resides. It will be accompanied by a companion exhibition at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY, on view from July 13 through November 13, 2022.

Denise Markonish, curator of the exhibition, states “Through his intermingling of culture and landscape Swanson reminds us that the rituals humans perform in the face of loss aren’t much different when enacted in the disco, the woods, or the cemetery. All of these spaces exist as sites of memorial and celebration where loss is just as palpable as survivors’ guilt.”

During the exhibition, director, choreographer and writer Jack Ferver will perform in the galleries including on part of the installation Swanson built specifically to serve as a stage. The performance will address ideas of mourning, camp, and the distancing of theatricality. The two previously collaborated on the 2015 work *Chambre*. Ferver will be present at the exhibition opening and will perform in the gallery in the spring/summer 2022. More details on the schedule of events will be released in the coming months.

MASSACHUSETTS MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
1040 MASS MoCA WAY
NORTH ADAMS MASSACHUSETTS 01247
PH 413 664 4481 FAX 413 663 8548
www.massmoca.org

Marc Swanson (born 1969, New Britain, Connecticut) earned an MFA from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College, NY in 2004. He has exhibited nationally and internationally in Sweden and Mexico, and was included in the second *Greater New York* exhibition at PS1 in 2005. Swanson has worked collaboratively with choreographer/dancer Jack Ferver to create sets for *Chambre* (2014/15). Select solo exhibitions include: The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, St Louis, MO; the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY; and the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX (2011). Additionally, Swanson collaborated with choreographer/dancer Jack Ferver on *Chambre* at the New Museum, New York, NY, Fischer Center at Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, and Institute for Contemporary Art, Maine College of Art, Portland, ME. His work is included in many public collections, including those of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; The Brooklyn Museum, NY; and the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, Australia. Swanson currently lives and works in Catskill, NY

Marc Swanson's presentation at the Thomas Cole Site is part of the ongoing series, **OPEN HOUSE: CONTEMPORARY ART IN CONVERSATION WITH COLE**, an annual series of curated contemporary artist installations sited within and in response to the historic home and studios of artist Thomas Cole. Operating from the concept that all art is contemporary, the program activates conversations between artists across centuries and is collaborative by nature. Projects may take the shape of a site-wide exhibition, performance, or other format reflecting the artist's practice and ideas. Installations and artworks have ranged from those that literally reference Cole's iconic works to those that expand on issues and themes relevant to Cole, including but not limited to art, landscape, history, and balancing the built and natural worlds. Drawn from newly created or relevant pre-existing works, OPEN HOUSE projects shed light on the connections between nineteenth century American art and our contemporary moment. Together the Cole Site and MASS MoCA will produce a catalogue to celebrate both exhibitions, which will be available at both locations this summer.

Programming at MASS MoCA is made possible in part by the Barr Foundation, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Mass Cultural Council, and the Joe Thompson "Yes" Fund. Support for A Memorial to Ice at the Dead Deer Disco is provided by the Artist's Resource Trust (A.R.T.) Fund, a fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. The artist would also like to thank Bridge Street Theatre, the Catskill Center, and Foreland Catskill.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest centers for making and enjoying today's most evocative art. With vast galleries and a stunning collection of indoor and outdoor performing arts venues, MASS MoCA is able to embrace all forms of art: music, sculpture, dance, film, painting, photography, theater, and new, boundary-crossing works of art that defy easy classification. Much of the work we show in our light-filled spaces, on our technically sophisticated stages, and within our lovely network of late 19th-century courtyards is made here during extended fabrication and rehearsal residencies that bring hundreds of the world's most brilliant and innovative artists to North Adams all year round. For more information about MASS MoCA, visit www.massmoca.org.

For more information, please contact:

Aga Sablinska
PAVE Communications & Consulting
aga@paveconsult.com

