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**CURRENTS 22: FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES**

**Dates: May 28 - September 12, 1993**

**Location: Teweles Gallery**

As part of its ongoing **Currents** series, the Milwaukee Art Museum will premiere a multiple-site installation designed expressly for Milwaukee and the Art Museum. According to Dean Sobel, curator of contemporary art and **Currents**, "this installation is truly remarkable. Since its inception in 1982, **Currents** has never featured works outside the confines of the Art Museum building. However, **Currents 22: Felix Gonzalez-Torres** will bring to Milwaukee a uniquely interpersonal installation located both in the Art Museum and on billboards throughout the county."

Gonzalez-Torres is a multi-media conceptual artist who imbues simple, yet highly metaphorical images with meanings and emotions evoked from personal history, both his own and the viewer's. For **Currents 22**, the artist has composed a work whose elements

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# News Release

operate both individually and as part of a larger composition. The outdoor billboards quietly display an amorphous image of a bird in flight. Their appearance will naturally change at an uneven rate due to the effects of the weather and, in their silent decomposition, provoke questions about the ephemeral nature of life. The dreamlike bird image appeals to the desire (often expressed in myth and dream) for the power to fly beyond the ordinary world; additionally, it may refer to birds as symbols of departing souls -- much of Gonzalez-Torres' work makes either general or explicit references to an intensely traumatic event, the loss of his partner to AIDS in 1991. The bird image also serves as a surrogate self-portrait with its references to the artist's northbound flights to visit his partner in Toronto. North, as conceptualized in this work, embodies a place of magic and love.

This idea of "north" can also be found in the exhibition centerpiece, *Untitled (North)*. Gonzalez-Torres will hang twelve strings of light bulbs so they fall from a single point in the gallery, drawing associations to the northern lights. At the gallery entrance, the artist will place a stacked paper piece. This latter work, composed of blank sheets of buff paper which viewers may take at their discretion, invites the audience to become co-creators by removing portions of the work from their original context and placing them elsewhere.

Gonzalez-Torres was born in Cuba in 1957, and currently resides in New York City. His work has been shown at several prestigious exhibitions in both America and Europe including the 1991 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and will be featured in the distinguished Venice Bienale in Italy this summer. Recent work by the artist has demonstrated a more pluralistic perspective, exploring how images from his personal history can be conveyed and interpersonalized in the public sphere, thereby producing neither singular nor double meanings, but exponential ones.

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**Exhibition Brochure.** The exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated brochure designed by the artist, with an introduction by Dean Sobel, curator of contemporary art at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

**Opening Lecture.** Felix Gonzalez-Torres will give an opening lecture at 6:15 p.m., May 27. A reception will follow, offering an opportunity to meet the artist and further discuss his work.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Milwaukee Art Museum  
750 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr.  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
tel: 414.224.3200  
fax: 414.271.7588  
artline: 414.224.3220

**Hours** Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.;  
Thursday, noon-9 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m.  
Closed Monday.

**Admission** \$4 adults; \$2 students, senior citizens. Free to children 12 and under with an adult. Members are admitted free at all times.

**Group Tours** Tours of the permanent collection and special exhibitions are available for groups making advance reservations. A guide fee of \$1/person is charged in addition to regular museum admission. Tours may be tailored to special interests. School groups are admitted for \$1.25/person which includes a guided tour. Call 414.224.3825 or 224.3840 for a tour request form.

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