

PRESS RELEASE

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**Williams College Museum of Art Presents  
Felix Gonzalez-Torres "Untitled" (Placebo), 1991  
December 1, 2007-March 23, 2008**

Williamstown, MA—the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) presents Felix Gonzalez-Torres's "Untitled" (Placebo), 1991. This monumental installation, on loan from the Museum of Modern Art, New York, features a single sculpture comprised of 1200 pounds – nearly 40,000 pieces – of silver-wrapped hard candy. This exhibition is being presented in observance of World AIDS Day, December 1, and continues a 16-year tradition at the museum. A gallery talk will be held on Saturday, December 1 at 4:30 pm with Williams Professor C. Ondine Chavoya and visiting scholar Jonathan Katz on the sociopolitical background of Gonzalez-Torres's work. This is a free public event and all are invited to attend.

One of Gonzalez-Torres's "candy spills," "Untitled" (Placebo), 1991, consists of 1,200 pounds of silver-wrapped hard candy arranged as a stunning carpet on the floor of the museum's largest gallery. Visitors are invited to take a candy and in so doing, contribute to the slow disappearance of the sculpture over the course of the exhibition. Gonzalez-Torres explores similar themes in his stacks of take-away posters, which also depend upon visitors' participation in the piece. Though Gonzalez-Torres created "Untitled" (Placebo) in response to the AIDS epidemic and, in particular, the loss of his partner, Ross, his use of an everyday commodity like candy allows viewers to draw their own meanings from each of his works.

"Over the four months of its unraveling, "Untitled" (Placebo) will give us the chance to reflect not only on the continuing AIDS epidemic, but to contemplate

the universal experiences of illness, death and loss that the sculpture in part symbolizes," says Andrea Gyorody, Williams Graduate Student in the History of Art, Class of 2009. Gyorody is an intern at WCMA and is organizing the presentation of the sculpture at the museum.

An essay focusing on the medical metaphors of "Untitled" (Placebo), written by Gyorody, accompanies the exhibition. A podcast featuring scholars speaking about Gonzalez-Torres's work will be available December 1 on the Williams College website: [www.williams.edu](http://www.williams.edu).

### **About the artist**

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, born in 1957, grew up in Puerto Rico and Cuba before moving to New York City. He received his BFA from Pratt Institute, attended the prestigious Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, and earned his MFA from New York University and the International Center of Photography. Following his first gallery show at Andrea Rosen Gallery in New York in 1991, Gonzalez-Torres has been the subject of many exhibitions, including American and European traveling retrospectives. Although he died in 1996 of AIDS-related complications, his work has continued to receive international attention. Most recently, he was selected as the United States representative at the 2007 Venice Biennale, only the second artist to have ever been chosen posthumously.

### **About World AIDS Day**

World AIDS Day, December 1, was first held in 1988 in order to increase awareness and education about the disease with the aim of stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS. Today, an estimated 1,200,000 persons in the United States are living with HIV/AIDS, with around 25% undiagnosed and unaware of their HIV infection. Worldwide, an estimated 39.5 million people are living with HIV or AIDS. Since the identification of HIV/AIDS in 1981, approximately 25 million people have died of AIDS. For more information, please visit:

<http://unaids.org>

<http://www.avert.org>

<http://www.worldaidscampaign.info>

<http://www.worldaidsday.org>