

CORCORAN

GALLERY OF ART • COLLEGE of ART + DESIGN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CORCORAN PRESENTS *CLAIRE HEALY AND SEAN CORDEIRO: ARE WE THERE YET?* Latest *NOW at the Corcoran* Exhibition on View December 3, 2011–March 11, 2012

WASHINGTON, D.C.— This winter, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design** will present *Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro: Are We There Yet?* the first exhibition in the United States of the Australian artists Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro. Commissioned by and created especially for the Corcoran, the exhibition is the third in the *NOW at the Corcoran* series, a program dedicated to showcasing the work of emerging and mid-career artists. The exhibition's highlight, a gallery-transforming installation on the Gallery's second floor, draws from American history, literature, pop culture, current affairs, and the architecture of the Corcoran to explore the symbolism of space exploration and the paradoxes of food consumption.

Occupying two spaces at the Corcoran, Healy and Cordeiro's project consists of a site-specific, gallery installation, *Are We There Yet?*, and a number of wall works constructed from Lego that continue the series *Where We've Been, Where We're Going, Why* (2010–11). Both portions of the exhibition refer directly to American history, literature, pop culture, and current affairs, exploring the symbolism of space exploration and the gulf between aspiration and reality. Their materials are the "readymades" found on our supermarket shelves and in toy stores, repurposed in the context of the museum. *Are We There Yet?* is a fanciful meditation on space travel, coming 50 years after the first human journey into outer space and the more recent shuttering of NASA's space shuttle program.

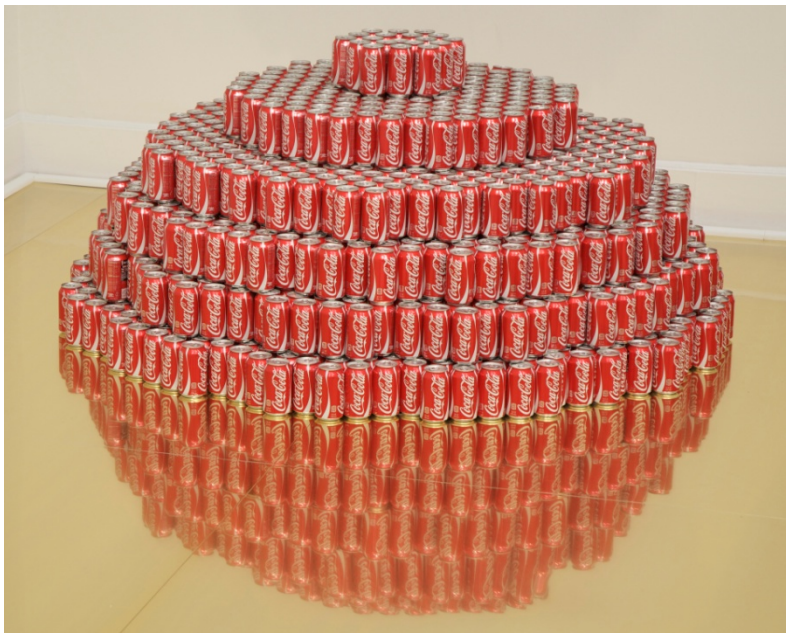
"Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro's projects are innovative and complex undertakings, and we are delighted to be presenting their work for the first time in the United States," said Beatrice Gralton, Evelyn S. Nef associate curator of contemporary art, the exhibition's organizer and curator. "This particular project explores the symbolism of space travel alongside the reality of consumerism. Healy and Cordeiro create art that examines the human



experience, and it is layered with references to film, art history, literature, and pop culture. It's been a privilege to learn about their working process and explore timely issues with them as they prepare this bold and thoughtful installation."

The artists stated, "Much of our work explores the models in which we live. Just as when we go on a camping trip we must analyze what is considered essential to take with us, we must do so on an even more acute level when thinking about space exploration. This kind of thought must necessarily challenge our ideas of what is important for human happiness and survival and what is not."

In the central installation, the gallery floor is covered with a reflective surface that references the final film sequence from Stanley Kubrick's iconic film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The gallery evokes the bedroom of an astronaut as well as the solar system, as symbolized by hemispheres made of food supplies. The products



comprising the installation, including cans of soft drink, boxes of cereal, and salty snacks, were selected on the basis of published sources of the most popular grocery items in America. Through this research, the artists quantified the amount of food necessary for an 'everyman' astronaut to undertake a 520-day journey to Mars and back: at 3,800 calories per day, a total of 1,976,000 calories. "Our work investigates the fundamentals of life," said the artists, "And it just so happens that certain objects are used to symbolize particular concepts. Large quantities of

products in this instance, in a Pop aesthetic, will visually convey what it takes to get to Mars."

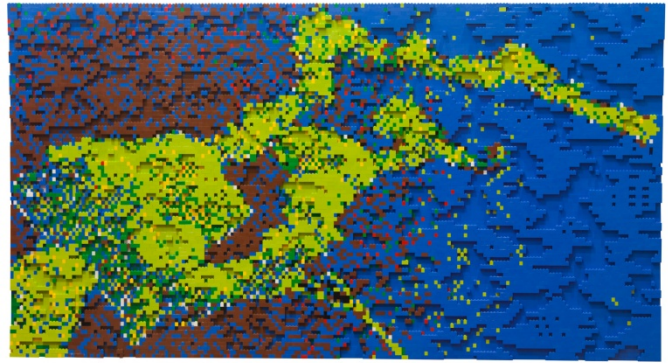
In addition to *Are We There Yet?* a number of new works from the series *Where We've Been, Where We're going, Why* (2010–2011), will be on view in the Corcoran Atrium. Constructed from Lego blocks, these large-scale wall works are based on photographs from the 1986 Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster. The works from the series are pixelated, abstracted arrangements of lurid color and shiny surfaces. According to Gralton, this series is "a disquieting reminder of human loss in the pursuit of knowledge. Unsettling, humbling, ambitious, and spirited, these works illustrate the crux of Healy and Cordeiro's practice."

The artists state, "Many of our past works have been concerned with deconstruction: analyzing the matter of an object through the deconstitution of its original shape and subsequent reconstitution into a different form. We are interested in Lego because it is an analogue of the modern house brick. The Lego brick, unlike its architectural counterpart, has the element of changeability and movement integral within its design. Working with the temporal

qualities of Lego, we are able to build the unbuilt.”

The nonperishable grocery items will take four weeks to assemble and install in the gallery space. At the close of the exhibition, the items will be distributed to local food banks and other organizations.

In addition to collaborating with Corcoran students prior to installation, the artists will take part in critiques of student work, deliver a public program at the Corcoran’s Francis and Armand Hammer Auditorium on Thursday, December 1, (*see Public Programs press release*) and participate in a Corcoran undergraduate class entitled Food Justice.



Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro: Are We There Yet? is organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art and supported by the Australian Government through the Embassy of Australia, Washington, D.C. and the Australia Council for the Arts. Additional support has been provided by the Corcoran Contemporaries.

ABOUT CLAIRE HEALY AND SEAN CORDEIRO

Claire Healy (b. 1971) and Sean Cordeiro (b. 1974) began collaborating on works in 2001 while undertaking their Master of Fine Arts research degrees at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. In 2005 they were awarded Australia Council residencies in Berlin and Tokyo, and they have since been based in Sydney and Berlin. In 2006-07 they were guest artists at the Universität der Künste, Berlin. In 2010 they participated in the residency program at the Akiyoshidai International Artist Village and took part in the *Setouchi International Art Festival 2010*.

Exhibitions of Healy and Cordeiro’s work include *PREMS* at La bf15, as part of the Biennale de Lyon 2009, *Paper Trail* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2007, *flatpack* at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in 2006, and *The Cordial Home Project*, Artspace Sydney in 2003. Their work has been included in numerous group exhibitions in Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, Turkey, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom.

Healy and Cordeiro’s installation *Life Span* was part of the Australian representation at the 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009. Their works are held in collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; and The University of Queensland Art Museum. In 2010, Sean Cordeiro was awarded a fellowship by the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council for the Arts. The exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, *Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro: Are We There Yet?* is the first presentation of their work in the United States.

ABOUT NOW AT THE CORCORAN

The exhibition series *NOW at the Corcoran* presents new work by emerging and mid-career artists. It highlights art

that addresses issues central to the local, national, and global communities of Washington, D.C. and that responds to the museum's collections, history, and architecture. In its investigation of how art is made, displayed, and thought about, the series embodies the dynamic relationship between the Corcoran Gallery and the Corcoran College of Art + Design and its active base of practicing art students and faculty. *NOW* artists participate in guest lectures, workshops, and studio critiques with students. At times they work directly with students to create *NOW* projects, a process that results in mutual learning.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Corcoran's hours of operation are as follows: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission to *Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro: Are We There Yet?* is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors (62+) and students (with valid ID), children 12 and under, military (with valid ID) and Corcoran Members enter for free.

ABOUT THE CORCORAN

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, a privately funded institution, was founded in 1869. It was America's first dedicated art museum and today is Washington's largest nonfederal museum of art. It is known internationally for its distinguished collection of historical and modern American art as well as contemporary art, photography, European painting, sculpture, and the decorative arts. In addition, a dynamic schedule of special exhibitions is complemented and enhanced by a range of educational programming, which together seek to enrich perspectives, support the local arts community, and encourage interpretation. **The Corcoran College of Art + Design** was founded in 1890 and stands as Washington's only four-year college of art and design, offering BFA degrees in Digital Media Design, Fine Art, Fine Art Photography, Graphic Design, Interior Design, and Photojournalism; a BA in Art Studies; a five-year Bachelor of Fine Arts/Master of Arts in Teaching (BFA/MAT); an AFA in Digital Media Design, Fine Art, Graphic Design, and Photography; and MA degrees in Art and the Book, Art Education, Exhibition Design, Interior Design, Master of Arts in Teaching, and New Media Photojournalism. The College's Continuing Education program offers part-time credit and non-credit classes for children and adults and draws more than 2,500 participants each year. For more information about the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design**, visit www.corcoran.org.



Images:

Page one: Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, Sydney 2009. Photo: Olivia Martin-McGuire.

Page two: Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, *Are We There Yet?* (detail) 2011. Gallery installation at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. 97 boxes of 3L Black Box Chardonnay, 360 Boyardee Beef Ravioli 15 oz. tins, 83 cases of Bud Light, 624 cans of Carnation Evaporated Milk, 43 Cheerios Twin pack 37 oz., 95 cases of Coca Cola, 40 Kraft Velveeta loaves (2 x 32 ounce loaves per package), 49 boxes of Nabisco Premium Saltine Crackers 3 lb., 25 cases of Marlboro Red, 41 containers of Utz cheese balls, replica EVA Space Suit on loan from NASA, IKEA bed, pillow, duvet, gold anodized aluminum, 239 x 732 x 312 in. Courtesy of the artists, Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney, and Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern, San Francisco.

Page three: Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, *T+102_blue&green*, 2011, from the series *Where We've Been, Where We're Going, Why*, 2010–2011. Lego, 34 ½ x 63 x 1 ½ inches. Courtesy of the artists, Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney.

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