MICA'S EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR, ARTIST DAMON RICH
AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS
EXPLORE BALTIMORE AS AN “OPEN CITY,” APRIL 1–MAY 15
Class Curates and Creates Artwork for Exhibition and Public Programs

BALTIMORE—Maryland Institute College of Art’s (MICA) 2010-11 Exhibition Development Seminar (EDS) will curate and create artwork for Baltimore: Open City, a free exhibition and series of interactive events intended to initiate a discussion around the idea of an “open city.” The students have invited scholars, activists, community-based organizations, local artists and visiting artist Damon Rich to develop a series of installations and public programs, coinciding with National Fair Housing Month, that investigate the ways in which people feel welcome or unwelcome in Baltimore neighborhoods. From Friday, April 1–Sunday, May 15, Baltimore: Open City will take place at the former North Avenue Market, 16 W. North Ave. Additional exhibition venues include a mobile unit that will act like an exhibition on wheels traveling around the city, and from Friday, April 8–Sunday, May 15, a downtown pop up shop at 142 W. Fayette St. A press preview is being scheduled on Thursday, March 31, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

The class defines an open city as “a place where everyone feels welcome, regardless of such things as wealth, race or religion. In every neighborhood of an open city, one feels like he or she belongs.” The students question, “does Baltimore feel open, or does housing discrimination, bad public transportation and the privatization of public space separate people and create an uneven distribution of opportunity?” Visitors are invited to join in this exploration of what a more open city might look and feel like.

Celebrated street artist and MICA senior Gaia contributes to the exhibition with The Legacy Project (pictured on right), which places architectural figures that have shaped a city landscape back onto the surface they designed so viewers can contextually reexamine the policies and infrastructures inherited by these urban plans. By gathering marble stoops from soon-to-be demolished row homes and placing them in public squares, Social Stoops Project (pictured in center) provides seating as well as a platform for conversations about the city’s past, present and future. In Baltimore Heavy Hitters, a Dungeons & Dragons-style playing card game pits heroes of Baltimore’s open housing movement against the forces of segregation and exclusion. Inspired by Pieter Bruegel’s Netherlandish Proverbs, The Arsenal of Exclusion mural depicts 101 methods of exclusion, ranging from gated communities to restrictive covenants to “no loitering” signs, in operation in an imaginary, hyper-segregated landscape. Other examples of public installations include a landmarking project that commemorates important sites regarding spatial segregation.
and awards thanking the city’s welcoming businesses, public spaces and neighborhoods.

Historical exhibition highlights will include a timeline of spatial segregation in Baltimore, with illustrative plans, maps, letters, newspaper articles and court records; interviews with citizens, scholars and activists about spatial justice in Baltimore; an A-Z glossary of policies, practices and institutions that have produced and combated the city’s spatial segregation; original maps of race, income, education and other important spatial justice indicators; an oral history project about East Baltimore; and a historical analysis of Baltimore’s early African-American suburbs.

“Baltimore is one of MICA’s best resources, and the College benefits from not having a campus that isolates students from the city that surrounds them,” said Daniel D’Oca, faculty member for this year’s EDS. “Baltimore: Open City is part of MICA’s ongoing effort to engage Baltimore by offering opportunities to students who wish to understand, learn from and hopefully contribute to the city’s dynamism.”

Baltimore: Open City will act as a “hub” where community-based organizations can present and discuss community plans and projects as well as spatial justice campaigns. The students are planning public programs, such as city tours with EDS historian-in-residence Antero Pietila and architect and preservationist Dale Glenwood Green; a STEW dinner, offering a fundraising opportunity and artful activism, with award-winning MICA alumni group Baltimore Development Cooperative; panel discussions with scholars, artists and activists including the Citizens Planning and Housing Association, Jacob France Institute, Poverty & Race Research Action Council and curators from Open City: Designing Coexistence (the theme of the 2009 International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam); a reception honoring past and present housing advocates in Baltimore; and high school activities and workshops.

In addition, EDS has co-organized a competition, with the Baltimore City Department of Transportation, Dcenter Baltimore, Maryland Transit Administration and Urbanite Project, seeking ideas to mitigate the impact on residents and businesses affected by the construction of Baltimore’s new mass transit line, the Red Line.

The annual EDS was created to examine the curatorial process through the research, planning and production of a major exhibition. Students are responsible for all aspects of the exhibition, including content, graphic identity, public programming, community outreach, website management, publications and public relations.

The exhibition hours at the former North Avenue Market will be Wednesday–Sunday, 2–8 p.m.; the pop up shop will be open Wednesday–Saturday, noon–6 p.m. For event updates, visit MICA’s website at www.mica.edu or the EDS website at www.baltimoreopencity.com.

For interview requests regarding Baltimore: Open City, call MICA’s Office of Communications at 410.225.2300. High-resolution images, for press purposes only, are available at: https://danube.mica.edu/baltimoreopencity/images.

Baltimore: Open City is part of an ongoing, global investigation of the open city, which was initiated by architect and urban designer Kees Christiaanse for the 2009 International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam.

Baltimore: Open City is made possible partially through generous support from the Friends of the Exhibition Development Seminar, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, Poverty & Race Research Action Council, Urbanite magazine, Maryland Transit Administration and MICA’s Office of Community Engagement, Office of Academic Services and Office of Communications.

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Founded in 1826, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) is the oldest continuously degree-granting college of art and design in the nation. The College enrolls more than 2,000 undergraduate, graduate and continuing studies students from 46 states and 53 countries in fine arts, design, electronic media, art education, liberal arts and professional studies degree and non-credit programs. Redefining art and design education, MICA is pioneering interdisciplinary approaches to innovation, research, and community and social engagement. Alumni and programming reach around the globe, even as MICA remains a cultural cornerstone in the Baltimore/Washington region, hosting hundreds of exhibitions and events annually by students, faculty, and other established artists.