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## For Immediate Release

Release Date:  
April 30, 2008

Exhibition:

***Decoys, Complexes, and Triggers: Feminism and Land Art in the 1970s***

Curator:

Catherine Morris

Exhibition Dates:

May 4 – July 28, 2008

Opening Reception:

Sunday, May 4, 4-6pm

Gallery Hours:

Thursday – Monday, 11am-6pm

Admission:

\$5 suggested donation

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## DECOYS, COMPLEXES, AND TRIGGERS: FEMINISM AND LAND ART IN THE 1970s

ALICE ADAMS, ALICE AYCOCK, LYNDA BENGLIS, AGNES DENES, JACKIE FERRARA, SUZANNE HARRIS, NANCY HOLT, MARY MISS, MICHELLE STUART, JACKIE WINSOR

**New York** – SculptureCenter is pleased to present ***Decoys, Complexes, and Triggers: Feminism and Land Art in the 1970s*** organized by guest curator **Catherine Morris**. *Decoys, Complexes, and Triggers* will be on view **May 4–July 28, 2008** with an opening reception on **Sunday, May 4, 2008 4-6pm**.

This exhibition focuses on work by women artists who made significant contributions to the development of sculptural practice in the 1970s. They explored the formal constructs of Post-Minimalism: altering notions of sculptural scale, introducing non-traditional mediums, as well as adapting unusual landscape and interior sites.

Utilizing an abstract, formal language, the artists in *Decoys, Complexes, and Triggers* helped define the structural conventions of Land Art and Post-Minimalism, such as architectural scale, the use of mathematical systems, and an awareness of the human body in relation to monumental works of art. The exhibition includes sculpture, models, photographs, drawings, video, and other forms of documentation, some of which has not been shown since its original exhibition. Many of the works in this exhibition contain oblique references to the body, subjectivity, and self-portraiture.

While some artists in *Decoys, Complexes, and Triggers* identified their work as Feminist, many of them, including Alice Aycock, Jackie Ferrara, and Nancy Holt explicitly rejected such categorization. This is not to say that these artists were not Feminists, only that their work was not based in a Feminist ideology and did not draw upon imagery and subject matter common to Feminist art of the time. They produced work of equal scale, ambition, and critical intentionality as their male peers.

Some work included in *Decoys, Complexes, and Triggers* is well known, such as documentation of Agnes Denes' *Wheatfield – A Confrontation* (1982), where the artist planted and harvested a two-acre wheat field in downtown Manhattan (currently Battery Park City). However, much of the work has not been exhibited in many years, in some cases since the period in which it made, such as Alice Aycock's *Stairs (These Stairs Can Be Climbed)* (1974), in which the title of the piece invites the viewer to climb a staircase, monumental in scale, only to be confronted with the ceiling of the gallery. In spite of its size, the work does not overwhelm the viewer, but rather invites a responsive, physical relationship. In addition to large-scale sculpture, the exhibition includes models, photographs, drawings, video, and other forms of documentation.

Reviewing this work now is important. The exhibitions and publications devoted to Feminist art

and more generally to art of the 1970s presented over the past decade have not addressed the significant contributions made by this group of artists. In addition, the critical interest in the formal issues of current sculptural practice makes a new examination of this radical work timely.

Catherine Morris is New York based independent curator and Adjunct Curator of Contemporary Art at the Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Focusing her independent work on alternative practices of the 1960s and 70s, Morris's projects include: "9 Evenings Reconsidered: Art, Theatre, and Engineering, 1966" (originating venue: MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2006); "Gloria: Another Look At Feminist Art in the 1970s" (originating venue: White Columns, New York, 2002, co-curated with Ingrid Schaffner); "Fort Greene, Brooklyn, A Social and Architectural History of a Neighborhood" (A:D/B Project Space, Brooklyn 2002); "Food" (originating venue: White Columns, New York, 1998) and "Confrontations: The Guerrilla Art Action Group, 1969-1976" (Printed Matter at DIA, New York 1997, co-curated with Steven Harvey). At the Philbrook Museum, Morris has worked on projects with Josiah McElheny, Cameron Martin and Lucy Gunning. Morris is a 2004 recipient of a Penny McCall Foundation Grant for Independent Curating and Writing.

#### Thanks

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*Decoys, Complexes and Triggers: Feminism and Land Art in the 1970s* is made possible in part with the support of Jeanne Donovan Fisher.

#### About SculptureCenter

Founded by artists in 1928, SculptureCenter is a not-for-profit arts institution dedicated to experimental and innovative developments in contemporary sculpture. SculptureCenter commissions new work and presents exhibits by emerging and established, national and international artists. In 2001, SculptureCenter purchased a former trolley repair shop in Long Island City, Queens. This facility, designed by artist/designer Maya Lin, includes 6,000 square feet of interior exhibition space, offices, and outdoor exhibition space.

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