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IWU News Advisory

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September 22, 2003

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Event: Art Exhibits: *What We Think We Know* by sculptor John McQueen in the Merwin Gallery and *Fragile Vessels* by painter Nicholas Sistler in the Wakeley Gallery

Date: Sept. 30 – Oct. 30, 2003

Artist's Talk, Sept. 30: 4-5 p.m., Room 218, Lecture Hall, Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art Building

Opening Reception: 5-6 p.m., immediately following the talk, in the galleries

Time: Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday, 12-4 p.m.
Tuesday evening, 7-9 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

Location: Merwin and Wakeley Galleries, Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art Building, 6 Ames Plaza West, Bloomington

Admission: Free, open to the public

Background: John McQueen's *What We Think We Know* exhibit will include his work from the past 13 years. He is recognized internationally for his innovative use of traditional basket-making materials and techniques. McQueen constructs complex three-dimensional forms using tied sticks arranged in complex and interesting ways.

McQueen's forms are of human figures, books, domestic objects, and plants. His art asks the viewer to reconsider the materiality of the world and to question the delicate balance of substance, imagination, and identity that forms our notions of reality.

According to fellow artist and occasional collaborator Margo Mensing, "Any group of John McQueen's sculptures is immediately recognizable as belonging together. This exhibition in the Merwin Gallery is particularly interesting because it presents a strange cluster...it ranges across geography, figures, and books. The earliest works, *Body of Sticks* (1991) and *Lake Michigan* (1992), demonstrate McQueen's step away...from the iconic basket."

Critics recognize Chicago painter Nicholas Sistler for creating infinite depth within the very limited surfaces of his dense and colorful miniatures, which are often no larger than a business card.

For many years, Sistler did not use the presence of the human figure in his paintings. In 2002, however, he began a series of paintings intentionally including the human figure. These new images, on display in the Wakeley Gallery, raise questions about the objectification of people within our society. Sistler says he is “interested in compelling people, through my art, at the very least to be more aware of their perceptions, and at most to shift their perception from objectification to identification, from indifference to compassion.”

Contact:

For additional information, call Jennifer Lapham, director of the IWU Merwin and Wakeley Galleries, at (309) 556-3391.