The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University Presents Two Videos, Shown for the First Time in a Museum, Filmed on Lake Michigan by Trinidadian Artist, Christopher Cozier that Address the Impact of Multinational Oil Companies.

LANSING, Mich.-May 16, 2015- Christopher Cozier’s exhibition, Entanglements, running June 27 through October 18, 2015 at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University, Cozier will present two recent single-channel videos, never before shown in a museum context, Gas Men and Globe (both 2014), that explore the presence and impact of multinational oil companies in various international locations. Filmed on Lake Michigan — a site that in recent years has witnessed repeated crude oil spills at BP’s Whiting plant in Indiana — these works address the politics of the global oil economy.

“The works in this exhibition sensitively reflect on the global ties between people and places. In this case connecting Lake Michigan—a site that has a strong presence in the landscape surrounding the Broad MSU—to other international locations,” says Assistant Curator Yesomi Umolu. “The questions of economic development, sustainability, and progress that these works raise are common and urgent ones in our time.”

Working across drawing, printmaking, video, and installation art, Trinidadian artist Christopher Cozier (b. 1959) exposes the social impact of commercial expansion and political opportunism. In each video, men in business suits draw fuel pump nozzles and hoses like pistols, swinging them in the air in a manner reminiscent of cowboy-style rope tricks or the whip cracking of carnival performances. These figures’ actions play out in the staccato rhythm of a crude stop-motion animation, their standoff recalling a Spaghetti Western set to a haunting soundtrack of sitar chords, live vocals, and sirens. In this take on what he calls “B-movie male heroic spectacle,” Cozier calls attention to the power dynamics of an economic paradigm that has grave effects on seemingly anonymous places, lives, and histories.

Taking conditions in post-independence Trinidad — an oil rich nation — as his point of entry, the artist is particularly attuned to the cultural shifts and historical erasure that have accompanied recent domestic and international economic policies within the broader Caribbean region. Cozier’s works cast a critical gaze on the realities of new-colonial enterprise while also referencing the fraught histories of Western colonialism. Cozier’s ongoing engagement with these narratives and their intersection with contemporary art practice extends to his role as founding member of Alice Yard, an experimental project space in Trinidad’s capital, Port of Spain.

Christopher Cozier: Entanglements is curated by Yesomi Umolu, Assistant Curator, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU and organized by the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University. Support for this exhibition is provided by the Broad MSU’s general exhibitions fund.

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum is the art museum of Michigan State University. It is free and open to the public. Also an engaged public institution, the Broad MSU is a contemporary museum devoted to the exploration and exhibition of emerging and mid-career artists from around the globe. Recently, the Broad MSU presented Indian artist Mithu Sen, Pakistani artist Imran Qureshi, and African artist John Akomfrah as part of its Global Focus series.

Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University

Opened on November 10, 2012, the dynamic 46,000-square-foot museum serves as both a teaching institution and a cultural hub for East Lansing and the region. In keeping with MSU’s commitment to applying knowledge to benefit society and further the global common good, the Broad MSU's program of original and traveling exhibitions; initiatives with living artists; performances; and educational offerings for students, faculty, and the community make the museum a center for questioning and understanding the modern world. With a collection containing 7,500 objects from the Greek and Roman periods through the Renaissance and on to the Modern, the Broad MSU is uniquely able to contextualize the wide range of contemporary art practices within a firm historical context. The museum is named in honor of Eli and Edythe Broad, longtime supporters of the university who provided the lead gift of $28 million. For more information, visit www.broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Michigan State University

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