

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE MAN I WISH I WAS : THE TALKIES EDITION
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Film Screening + Discussion with artists Thomas Allen Harris, Sarah Maple, and Linda Montano

On Wednesday, January 27th at 6pm ARTBOOK in conjunction with A.I.R. Gallery will hold a special film screening at X-initiative. The event is open to the public and will include a roundtable discussion with the artists following the screening. The films to be screened augment the selections that comprise **The Man I Wish I Was**, a month-long exhibit currently on display at A.I.R. Gallery through January 31st.

In keeping with the feminist tradition of irreverent internal-critique and self-vigilance the intent of **The Man I Wish I Was** is to question how gender perception relates to personal identity. Expanding on this premise the roundtable discussion will also explore how social constructs surrounding race, religion, sexuality, and the body play into and inform self-identity.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS | FILMS

Thomas Allen Harris | *Splash* (7 min) : A fable-like tale, ***Splash*** explores the interplay between identity, fantasy and desire in pre-adolescence within the narrow construction of masculinity. Harris writes “***Splash*** began as an experimental documentary about a black woman, hair and conventions of beauty and desire. As I began to delve deeper into the project and immersed myself in the works of Isaac Julien, Marlon Riggs, bell hooks, Stuart Hall, Toni Morrison, and Alice Miller, as well as my brother Lyle Ashton Harris, I began to understand my own ambivalence around issues of ethnicity, gender, representation, and desire, issues I was exploring indirectly through this black woman.”

A recent recipient of the United States Artist Award, Harris has also received awards, grants and fellowships from such institutions as the Sundance Institute, Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Jerome Foundation, Paul Robeson Fund, and Lannan Foundation. He was included in the 1995 Biennial Exhibition of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and his works have been extensively screened around the world. In addition to producing films, installations, and experimental video works, Harris has produced documentaries for public television; his television documentary work has twice been nominated for an Emmy Award. A Harvard graduate, Harris has taught at Sarah Lawrence College and the Visual Arts Department of UCSD.

Sarah Maple | Who Would Wood Wank (3 min) and Saw (3 min): This event will mark the U.S. premiers of both **Who Would Wood Wank** and **Saw**. Co-produced with Dazed & Confused's Jefferson Hack and Dolce & Gabbana for Nick Knight's show studio on the theme of political fashion, "**Who Would Wood Wank**" shows Maple "wanking" a paintbrush, alternating from her wearing a burka to wearing a Dolce & Gabbana couture dress. Much of Maple's inspiration originates from being brought up as a Muslim, with parents of mixed religious and cultural backgrounds. Blurring the lines between popular culture and religious devotion in an unfailingly mischievous manner, Sarah's aesthetic narrative urges the viewer to challenge traditional notions of religion, identity and the societal role of women.

Sarah Maple was born in 1985 and grew up in Sussex where she now lives. She holds a BA in Fine Art from Kingston University and in October 2007 won the '4 New Sensations' award organized by the U.K.'s Channel 4 and The Saatchi Gallery. Maple's work has been featured on the cover and inside of both *Swindle* and *Nylon* magazines. Her work has been widely reviewed and exhibited at White Box (New York), *Scream* gallery (London) and *Salon Contemporary* gallery (London). Maple has recently been invited to speak at Amnesty International's upcoming *Wise Words* festival set to take place this March in London.

Linda Montano | Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda M. Montano (12:49 min) : **The Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda M. Montano** follows the artist's journey through seven self-transformative stages: 1) Catholic life, 2) nun's life, 3) yoga life, 4) Buddhist life, 5) feminist life, 6) natural life, 7) life. Says Montano about the film "Publicly, I am admitting that I am a spiritual materialist—been there, done that—but I am also saying that all of my spiritual experiences have worked together to prepare me for even deeper journeys combining all of the sacred technologies I have learned so that I can re-invent my own way."

Linda M. Montano is a seminal figure in contemporary feminist performance art and her work since the mid 1960s has been critical in the development of video by, for, and about women. Attempting to dissolve the boundaries between art and life, Montano continues to actively explore her art/life through shared experience, role adoption, and intricate life altering ceremonies, some of which last for seven or more years. Her artwork is starkly autobiographical and often concerned with personal and spiritual transformation. Montano's influence is wide ranging - she has been featured at museums including The New Museum in New York, MOCA San Francisco and the ICA in London.

A.I.R. Gallery was founded in 1972 and is the first artist-run, not-for-profit art gallery for women artists in the United States. www.airgallery.org

ARTBOOK specializes in new books on art, photography, architecture, design and critical theory. www.artbook.com

X is a not-for-profit initiative of the global contemporary art community that will exist for one year and will feature durational artist interventions, site-specific projects, historical in-depth exhibitions, one-night performances, lectures and weekly events. www.x-initiative.org

EVENT LOCATION: X-initiative is located on 22nd Street between 10th and 11th Avenues in the Chelsea district of Manhattan : 548 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011. For additional information, please contact Rick McIntire at ARTBOOK @ X at 917.239.3638 or rmcintire@dapinc.com.

Images from left to right: Thomas Allen Harris, *Splash*; Linda Mary Montano, *Seven Spiritual Lives of Linda M. Montano* (courtesy of Video Data Bank); Sarah Maple, *Saw* (courtesy of Salon Contemporary)