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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Written on the Wind: The Flag Project
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Rubin Museum of Art (RMA) is pleased to present, ***Written on the Wind: The Flag Project***, an exhibition of contemporary art and design that links the traditional and the contemporary, community and museum, artist and audience. The works on view were contributed to RMA to be produced in the form of Tibetan prayer flags to welcome this new museum to Chelsea on the occasion of its grand opening on October 2, 2004.

In early summer 2004, artists Kiki Smith and Arlene Shechet, working with the RMA start-up team, reached out to more than 100 contemporary artists and asked them to design a flag to fly at the opening. The response was overwhelming, as wide-ranging and varied as the individual artists and their particular responses to the presence and meaning of this brand-new museum of Himalayan art in Chelsea.

The original works of art were printed on pieces of silk, cut into small squares and hung in strings in the traditional manner of Tibetan prayer flags, a customary Himalayan means of setting into motion auspicious forces and quelling harmful ones. As the doors of RMA opened to the public for the first time, the strings of flags were raised. Aloft and aflutter, they filled the air with an abundance of good wishes, unfurling to reveal a colorful medley of contemporary art and to dispense good fortune.

Until now, the flags have not been available for individual scrutiny. ***Written on the Wind: The Flag Project*** brings viewers eye to eye with the flags so that the individual and different messages can be closely explored. Approximately 60 flags will be presented in the medium in which the work was originally submitted, ranging from acrylic on canvas and digital prints to fabric and etching print. The rest will be presented in digital form.

Among the artists who created flags are Kiki Smith, Arlene Shechet, Robert Alter, Robert Barry, Louise Bourgeois, Phong Bui, Emily Cheng, Joan Sherman, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Palden Weinreb, and RMA's Artist-in-Residence, Pema Rinzin.

A full-color catalog that documents the original project and accompanies the exhibition, The Flag Project: Contemporary Artists Celebrate the Opening of a New Museum, is available at The Shop at RMA.

About RMA

RMA houses an esteemed collection of Himalayan art. The paintings, pictorial textiles, and sculpture are drawn from cultures that touch upon the 1,800 mile arc of mountains that extends from Afghanistan in the northwest to Myanmar (Burma) in the southeast and includes Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and Bhutan. The larger Himalayan cultural sphere, determined by significant cultural exchange over millennia, includes Iran, India, China, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

The rich cultural legacy of this region, largely unfamiliar to Western viewers, offers an uncommon opportunity for visual adventure and aesthetic discovery. For young and old alike it is an environment in which to encounter the unknown and find meaningful dialogue. It requires actively bringing to bear one's previous experience, looking closely at the material at hand, discriminating carefully, and shaping the imagination. The fundamental aim of the Museum is to provide this adventure in learning through art.

Working to foster connections between visitors and the art is RMA's diverse team of knowledgeable and professional guides who are always available on the gallery floors to answer questions, engage in discussions, and help explore the art at any level. The guides work in concert with RMA's ambitious schedule of exhibitions, education, and public programming, designed to provide multiple entryways to delve into Himalayan art.