

## NEWS RELEASE

### NEW COMMISSIONED WORKS BY JULIE MEHRETU ON VIEW AT THE GUGGENHEIM MAY 14

**Exhibition:** The Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim  
*Julie Mehretu: Grey Area*  
**Venue:** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum  
1071 Fifth Avenue, New York  
**Location:** Annex Tower 2  
**Dates:** May 14–October 6, 2010  
**Preview:** Thursday, May 13, 2010, 10 am–12 pm

(NEW YORK, NY – April 26, 2010) — *Julie Mehretu: Grey Area*, an exhibition of six new large-scale paintings by American artist Julie Mehretu, is presented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum as part of the Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim, May 14 to October 6, 2010. Commissioned in 2007 by Deutsche Bank and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the suite of semiabstract works is inspired by a multitude of sources, including historical photographs, urban planning grids, modern art, and graffiti, and explores the intersections of power, history, dystopia, and the built environment, along with their impact on the formation of personal and communal identities.

*Julie Mehretu: Grey Area* is organized by Joan Young, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art and Manager of Curatorial Affairs, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

*Julie Mehretu: Grey Area* is made possible by Deutsche Bank.

The Leadership Committee for *Julie Mehretu: Grey Area* is gratefully acknowledged.

Berlin plays a significant role in the investigation of memory and the urban experience in the *Grey Area* suite, first conceived during a residency by Mehretu at the American Academy in Berlin in 2007. During this residency, the artist was struck by the continuously shifting profile of Berlin, a historically charged city where vestiges of war coexist with new architectural

development. For Mehretu, the visible evidence of destruction and recovery on the facades and streetscapes of Berlin also conjures the physical aftermath of war around the world, as in the paintings *Believer's Palace* (2008–09), which references the partially destroyed palace that sat atop Saddam Hussein's Baghdad bunker, and *Atlantic Wall* (2008–09), which renders the interiors of bunkers built by Germany along the Western European coastline during World War II.

According to Joan Young, “Julie Mehretu adapts enigmatic circumstances as a tool to engage the viewer in her complex compositions of meticulously drawn mechanical renderings, spontaneous gestural markings, and colorful interjections. Whether capturing specific settings or the general tenor of the urban experience, such as in *Berliner Plätze* (2008–09) and *Fragment* (2008–09), respectively, Mehretu's paintings evoke the psychogeography of the city and the effects of the built environment on individuals while at the same time contemplating the past and the surviving traces of lived history.”

Approximately 10 x 14 feet in size, Mehretu's paintings are characterized by a remarkable sense of pictorial space. Using ink and acrylic paint, she layers detailed schematic depictions of buildings and cityscapes with abstracted forms and lines, playing with the depth of the composition. Through this layering, combined with the use of erasure and the smudging of gestural marks, structures seem to dissolve on the surface of the canvas. Yet as author and critic Brian Dillon writes in his catalogue essay, “An Archaeology of the Air,” “The moments of articulate erasure in the paintings amount to a kind of restoration: of openness, contingency, and potential at the level both of the painted mark or character and the underlying architectural motif. If there is an archaeology of the recent past in Mehretu's work, it is the archaeology of an atmosphere charged with the dust of demolition and rebuilding.”

### **Julie Mehretu**

Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1970, Mehretu was raised in Michigan. She studied at Kalamazoo College in Michigan (BA, 1992) and at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar in Dakar, Senegal (1990–91). She received an MFA in painting and printmaking from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1997. Mehretu has participated in numerous international exhibitions and biennials and has received international recognition for her work, including, in 2005, the American Art Award from the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the prestigious MacArthur Fellow award. She has had residencies at the Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (1998–

99), the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2001), the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (2003), and the American Academy in Berlin (2007). Mehretu currently lives and works in New York and Berlin.

### **The Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim and the Deutsche Guggenheim Commission Program**

*Julie Mehretu: Grey Area* is the second exhibition in the Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim, which is dedicated to exhibiting in New York works of art commissioned jointly by Deutsche Bank and the Guggenheim Foundation as well as other thematic exhibitions after their initial presentation at the Deutsche Guggenheim.

In 1997 the Guggenheim Foundation and Deutsche Bank opened the Deutsche Guggenheim and launched a unique and ambitious program of contemporary-art commissions. This collaboration has enabled the Guggenheim Foundation to act as a catalyst for artistic production. The Deutsche Guggenheim was conceived as a partnership and consists of three main objectives: the presentation of thematic exhibitions that recognize artists who have contributed significantly to the development of art; the presentation of works from the Deutsche Bank Collection; and the commissioning of site-specific works by both emerging and established artists. Artists who have created new works as part of this program since its inception include John Baldessari, Hanne Darboven, Anish Kapoor, William Kentridge, Jeff Koons, Julie Mehretu, Gerhard Richter, James Rosenquist, Andreas Slominski, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Bill Viola, Jeff Wall, Phoebe Washburn, Lawrence Weiner, and Rachel Whiteread.

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

An illustrated 96-page catalogue titled *Julie Mehretu: Grey Area* accompanies the exhibition and includes essays by Joan Young and Brian Dillon. Designed by Tracey Shiffman, with Alex Kohnke and Summer Shiffman of Tracey Shiffman Design, Los Angeles, and in collaboration with Julie Mehretu, the catalogue features source materials selected by the artist, as well as a selection of photographs by Mark Hanauer tracing the development of the series in the artist's Berlin studio. Priced at \$45 and offered in a hardcover edition, the catalogue may be purchased at the Guggenheim Store or at the Online Store at [guggenheimstore.org](http://guggenheimstore.org) beginning May 14.

### **Curator's Eye Guided Tours**

Free with museum admission

Guggenheim curator Joan Young leads tours of *Julie Mehretu: Grey Area*.

Fridays, June 4 and August 13, 2 pm

### **The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation**

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. Currently the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation owns and operates the Guggenheim Museum on Fifth Avenue in New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection on the Grand Canal in Venice, and also provides programming and management for two other museums in Europe that bear its name: the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a museum of modern and contemporary art designed by architect Frank Gehry, is scheduled to open in 2013.

### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

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**Admission:** Adults \$18, students/seniors (65+) \$15, members and children under 12 free. Admission includes an audio tour.

**Museum Hours:** Sun–Wed, 10 am–5:45 pm; Fri, 10 am–5:45 pm; Sat, 10 am–7:45 pm; closed Thurs. On Saturdays, beginning at 5:45 pm, the museum hosts Pay What You Wish. For general information, call 212 423 3500 or visit [guggenheim.org](http://guggenheim.org).

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### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT**

Claire Laporte, Publicist

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

212 423 3840

[pressoffice@guggenheim.org](mailto:pressoffice@guggenheim.org)

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