

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, May 21, 2010

CONTACT:

Shira Farber

HEMPHILL Fine Arts

1515 14th Street NW

Washington, DC 20005

202.234.5601

shira@hemphillfinearts.com

www.hemphillfinearts.com



MARY EARLY, UNTITLED, 2009 (detail), WOOD AND BEESWAX, 36" H x 150" DIAMETER

**Mary Early: Sculpture
June 10 - August 7, 2010**

Washington DC – Hemphill Fine Arts opens *Mary Early: Sculpture* on Thursday, June 10, 2010 with a public reception from 6:30-8:30 pm. The exhibition will remain on view through August 7, 2010.

Mary Early is not cool. She may be hip, intellectual, authoritative; but she, or I should say her artwork, is not cool. At a glance her installations may appear to be extensions of certain late modernist sculptural strategies with their presumption of objectivity, detachment and cool. It would be correct to identify minimalism, serial art, and other absolutist modernist aesthetics as the foil against which to interpret her work. But to stop there is to miss the work's ambitious content--content that is personal, expressive and hot as opposed to cool.

Early's process is to initially determine a shape or component with which to construct an artwork, and then to make numerous copies of that component. Each component is fabricated from laminated strips of wood bound by cheesecloth, covered in natural beeswax and polished. These seemingly generic shapes are balanced against one another, interlocked to create a whole sculptural installation. The exhibition at Hemphill is comprised of two large installation pieces complemented by a small-scale work.

Early's application and careful polishing of the beeswax surface reveals a degree of craftsmanship and leaves evidence of the artist's hand. The artist's presence is further felt in the unplanned construction of the installation. Early discovers the final composition by testing how the components interact. Beyond the visual experience, which includes a play of patterns, negative spaces and shadows, Early's sculptures possess an aroma, the perfume of natural beeswax. By incorporating this undeniably emotional element, the artist not only communicates something biological but also something ephemeral. These non-visual and personal elements contrast with the idealism implied by her structures. Early's work juxtaposes the illusion of permanence with the temporary nature of life.

Mary Early received a Bachelor of Arts from Bennington College in 1997 with a concentration in sculpture, drawing, and printmaking. She is a two-time recipient of the Artist Fellowship Grant from the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities (2007, 2009). Her work is included in the collections of the US Department of State/Embassy of Panama, Kimpton Hotels, and other public and private collections.

This exhibition is concurrent with *Emma Tapley: New Paintings*.

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday - Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM and by appointment.

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR REPRODUCTION.

###