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LOCATION	Walter and McBean Galleries San Francisco Art Institute, 800 Chestnut Street
DATES	September 22 through December 9, 2006
RECEPTION	Thursday, September 21, 5:30–7:30pm
LECTURE	Tuesday, September 26, 7:30pm
COST	Lecture and Exhibition free and open to the public
PRESS CONTACT	Lucy Martin, 415.749.4507, lmartin@sfai.edu
IMAGES	Hi-resolution Images Available

## ***sarkis: alive and after***

San Francisco, CA (August 18, 2006)—San Francisco Art Institute is pleased to present *Sarkis: Alive and After*, the first major US exhibition to examine the work of Paris-based artist Sarkis, bringing long overdue attention to this prominent figure of the global art scene whose career spans more than 40 years. Curated by Hou Hanru, SFAI’s new Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs, this exhibition presents an installation of 39 films, a suite of watercolor drawings, texts, photographs, and site-specific neon works.

“This complex and enduring project opens up a space in which the audience can enter into a continuous dialogue with the artist, and with the fantastic world that the artist has created through his infinite dialogue with other creators,” explains Hou Hanru. “With *Alive and After*, SFAI’s galleries become a site of production, a laboratory, a workshop . . . Sarkis’ practice not only includes his own productions, but also the exchanges between himself, his works, and the audience. His work represents the oscillation between exile and freedom, cultural difference and social restructuring, which are highly significant and influential ideas in our age of globalization.”

Born in Istanbul to an Armenian family, Sarkis currently lives and works in Paris. Evolving out of his experience as an “exile,” Sarkis’ work can be seen as a meditation on the tensions between memory

and space. His works are profoundly concerned with humanity, and, in the words of Hou Hanru, “His works unfold a personal universe from the contrasts between light and darkness, green and red, material and immaterial, appearance and disappearance . . .” Simultaneously, Sarkis illuminates the relationship between cinema and contemporary art. As writer/critic Érik Bulloz describes, “At a time when the relationships between cinema and contemporary art are multiplying and questioning the different frontiers of artistic practice, it is enlightening to observe the delicate and violent film work of Sarkis.”

*Sarkis: Alive and After* will consist of four distinct components. First, Sarkis has conceived a site-specific installation of his film works. Culled from the over 100 short films he has made in the last decade, a program of 39 films will be displayed on over a dozen monitors installed on platforms in the gallery. Second, a series of photographs accompanied by poetic texts painted directly on the gallery walls will create a constellation of memory that shifts between filmic movement and static images. A special interactive space will comprise the third component of the exhibition. Surrounding Andreï Tarkovsky’s 1979 film, *Stalker*, a series of watercolors will record Sarkis’ efforts—aided by his exchanges with students and visitors—to reconstruct the film in a reverse timeline and meet the plot midway. Finally, Sarkis will react spontaneously to the space of the school, gallery, and city, creating site-specific neon works for the exhibition.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a complementary series of rare avant-garde films will be screened at SFAI in October and November. The films, selected by Sarkis as those that have influenced his practice, include Wang Bing's rarely screened 10-hour film *West of Tracks*. The film screening dates are as follows; all screenings are free and take place at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted.

10/03: *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet  
10/10: *The Color of Pomegranates*, Sergei Paradjanov  
10/17: *Ice*, Robert Kramer  
10/24: *Stalker*, Andreï Tarkovski  
10/31: *One Plus One (Sympathy for the Devil)*, Jean-Luc Godard  
11/04 & 05: *Tie Xi Qu: West of Tracks*  
(10-hour film in 3 parts both days: 11am–2pm, 2:30pm–5:30pm, 7pm–10pm)  
(TBA): *The Seasons*, Artavazd Pelechian

A prominent figure in the global art scene since the 1960s, Sarkis has enjoyed several solo exhibitions at venues including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon; Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf; CAPC, Bordeaux; and Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble; as well as participated in major international exhibitions such as Documenta VI and VII, the Shanghai, Venice, and Istanbul Biennials, and in the seminal exhibition *Les Magiciens de la Terre* at Centre Georges Pompidou. *Alive and After* will be the first major US exhibition of Sarkis' work, bringing long overdue attention to this important artist. This exhibition therefore functions as both a unique, site-specific project created by Sarkis for SFAI's Walter and McBean Galleries, and as an opportunity to rethink the notion of exhibitions.

The exhibition *Sarkis: Alive and After* and Sarkis' public lecture are supported by a generous grant from Étant donné: The French-American Fund for Contemporary Art. This exhibition has also been made possible by the support of Galerie Jean Broly, Paris. The Director of Le Franc & Bourgeois has generously donated materials for a workshop between Sarkis and SFAI's City Studio for Saturday, September 23. An exhibition catalogue with texts by Hou Hanru, Érik Bulloz, and Okwui Enwezor is forthcoming.

SFAI's Public Programs are supported in part by the Grants for the Arts / San Francisco Hotel Tax fund.

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## **about san francisco art institute**

Founded in 1871, San Francisco Art Institute is one of the US's oldest and most prestigious schools of higher education in contemporary art. SFAI's academic and public programs further the relationship between the practices and theories of contemporary art. SFAI's School of Studio Practice is centered on the development of the artist's vision through studio-based experiments and the understanding that the artist is an essential part of society. The School of Interdisciplinary Studies is based on the premise that critical thinking and writing—informed by an in-depth understanding of theory and practice—are essential for engaging global society. At SFAI, art is a way of thinking. For more information, visit [www.sfai.edu](http://www.sfai.edu) (800.345.SFAI).