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“Everything Must Go” – a farewell exhibit in Dorchester for artist Thomas Ray Willis

DORCHESTER, MA – **Thomas Ray Willis** from **Las Vegas, NV** was the first resident artist of the artist-run studio and exhibition space **Dorchester Art Project** when it was originally founded as the **Howard Art Project** in June 2011. This exhibit commemorates the closing of Thomas’ six year tenure at the DAP and his prolific contributions to the contemporary art scene in Boston over the past decade.

His solo art exhibit **“Everything Must Go”** takes place **July 17 - 30, 2017** and is open by appointment. A closing reception and farewell for Thomas will take place **Friday, July 28 from 6-9pm**. The event is free and open to the public.

The exhibition features works Thomas has made over his productive six year residency at the DAP. As the title of the show suggests every work “must go,” so every piece from his studio will be for sale (you will have to barter with a hired performer to have one for a low price!). Many of these works have been exhibited at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum’s 2013 Biennial (Lincoln, MA), the New Art Center (Newton, MA), Casablanc Gallery (Roxbury, MA), Jewett Art Center (Wellesley College, MA), McGladery Gallery (Bentley University, MA), Proof Gallery (South Boston, MA), How’s Howard (South End, MA), Gallery 263 (Cambridge, MA), as well as many other contemporary art spaces across New England. Thomas leaves his home in Dorchester to pursue his Master of Fine Arts at NYU this fall.

Thomas is an artist working across media and in installation, with a particular interest in the rituals of the experience economy. His paintings, objects, and performances combine elements of irony, references to American visual culture, and a kitsch minimalism aesthetic to engage sites of global consumerism and address the commercial status of the art object. His outlook is informed by the parallel worlds of his hometown—Las Vegas—as both a local community and Vegas as spectacle. Thomas’ art has been featured in prominent publications such as *Big Red & Shiny*, *The Las Vegas Weekly* and *The Huffington Post*. His work has been exhibited across the United States with works in both public and private institutions such as the Luo Ruvo Center for Brain Health (NV), Socrates Sculpture Park (NY), and the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas (NV). Throughout his stay in Boston, Thomas worked as a professional studio photographer and had photographs published in *The New York Times Style Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, *Cooling Hunting*, *The Creators Project* and *Artforum*. Since 2013, Thomas has been working as the Instructional Technology Specialist for the Art Departments at Wellesley College (MA). Thomas received his BFA in painting and drawing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2009.

"I would say Dorchester is a wonderful place for an artist to work in Boston but I am afraid the ICA would consider opening a third location here." says the artist.

Thomas’ work can be viewed on his website at www.thomasraywillis.com

About the Dorchester Art Project

Dorchester Art Project is an artist-run space in Dorchester MA, Boston’s largest neighborhood. Housing fourteen artists’ studios, a gallery, and a performance space, DAP supports innovative artistic practice outside of the city’s academic institutions and commercial galleries. By providing an alternative space for critically engaged, experimental and emerging artists across disciplines, we seek to foster new connections across Boston’s diverse art communities.

