



MEDIA CONTACT
Taras W. Matla
301.405.1474
tmatla@umd.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 28, 2014

**THE ART GALLERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND PRESENTS
WHAT'S IN A MEME?**

Changing world of viral Internet phenomena examined in exhibition

COLLEGE PARK, Md.—From March 13-April 26, 2014, The Art Gallery at the University of Maryland (UMD) presents *What's in a Meme?* This is the most comprehensive exhibition of its kind that delves into the very nature of memes, as well as their limits and possibilities in art.

“What do a grumpy cat, a K-pop star, and the former U.S. Secretary of State all have in common,” asks exhibition curator Kate Kula. According to Ms. Kula, “In one way or another, they have all ‘gone viral,’ inspiring images that spread like a cultural epidemic via social networks, E-mail, and YouTube, and spawn sometimes countless iterations. This exhibition explores the diverse, irreverent, and constantly changing world of these viral Internet phenomena.”

Carefully selected examples on display in the gallery elicit more questions than answers. How do some videos, photographs, and illustrations gain near-instant popularity – seized upon by the Twitterverse, recognized by the media, imitated by the President – while others never escape the depths of Internet message boards? What do memes communicate about our shared values as a society - what we find funny, and what current events are worth knowing? How can they illuminate issues surrounding originality, intentionality, and cultural (mis)appropriation in an era dominated by social media? Are Internet memes *art*?

An opening reception for *What's in A Meme?* will be held on Thursday, March 13th, from 5:00-7:00pm at The Art Gallery, 2202 Art-Sociology Bldg., College Park, MD 20742. For more information, please call 301.405.2763 or e-mail theartgallery@umd.edu.

###

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

What's in a Meme? and its accompanying exhibition (blog) publication is organized by Kate Kula, Curator, The Art Gallery. The Art Gallery thanks the Department of Art History & Archeology for their support. Financial contributions provided by the Maryland State Arts Council with direct support from by the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional financial support from the University of Maryland provided by College of Arts and Humanities, The Graduate School, and Office of Student Financial Aid/Federal Work-Study Program (FWS). The gallery is also supported in part by other national, state, and local arts agencies, foundations, corporations, and private donors.

THE ART GALLERY

Founded in 1955, The Art Gallery is University of Maryland's premier space for exhibiting cutting-edge visual and media arts. Through the display of significant and challenging contemporary art—with an emphasis on emerging and mid-career artists—The Art Gallery commits itself to the further cultivation of new, innovative, and education-minded scholarship. In order to share its works with a broad public, The Art Gallery also organizes thematic and collection-based exhibitions that travel to museums nationwide.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Art Gallery is located at University of Maryland, 2202 Art-Sociology Building, College Park, Maryland. Gallery hours: Monday through Friday, 11:00am to 4:00pm. The gallery is closed Saturday and Sunday, major holidays and on days that home sports events are held at Capital One Field at Byrd Stadium. Admission is free and open to the public. Office hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm. The office is closed on Saturday and Sunday, and major holidays. For general information, please call 301.405.2763 or visit the website at www.artgallery.umd.edu.