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Immediate Release

Press Contact:
Karen Gysin
612.375.7651
karen.gysin@
walkerart.org

**BELGIAN ARTIST WIM DELVOYE'S LIFE-SIZED REPLICA OF A
CATERPILLAR EXCAVATOR JUXTAPOSES
MIEVEAL CRAFTSMANSHIP WITH MACHINE-AGE TECHNOLOGY**

DELVOYE'S SCULPTURE ON VIEW IN MINNEAPOLIS SCULPTURE GARDEN

Belgian artist Wim Delvoye's life-sized replica of a Caterpillar excavator made of Corten steel perforated with Gothic filigree is on view in the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden at the Walker Art Center. On loan for two years, *Caterpillar #5* (2002), part of Delvoye's Gothic series on view last summer in New York City's Madison Square Park and Doris C. Freedman Plaza, juxtaposes medieval craftsmanship with machine-age technology.

In Delvoye's wide-ranging artistic practice, opposites attract: divine merges with secular, past meets present, and ornament overcomes strict functionality. From Notre Dame Cathedral to St. John the Divine, Gothic architecture looms large in our cultural imagination: Its breathtaking verticality was a sign of dazzling architectural feat, achieved one stone at a time by generations of workers and artisans. Today, heavy machinery like excavators, bulldozers, and cranes can accomplish almost overnight what once took decades. In Delvoye's sculptures, these two far-flung eras come together, and one can even find formal similarities between the reaching, angular arms of Delvoye's earthmovers and the soaring towers of a Gothic cathedral. In an interview published in a recent issue of *Surface* magazine, Delvoye commented: "It's always like a marriage between two things. It's ambivalent, it's very corten steel but then it's also very perforated. . . . I'm doing something completely absurd; it's something that would never be

(more)

ornate. It's like enjoying the decadence of ornamenting something that's not worth being ornate but at the same time you heroicize the banality."

There are visible references to Notre Dame in the squared-off double cab and circular rose window of Delvoye's Caterpillar. All the works in the series—shovels, a wheelbarrow, and a concrete mixer, among them—are an amalgamation of Gothic structures. Repeated arches, intricately patterned florets, and undulating lines transform these familiar icons of productivity into ornate, non-utilitarian objects. The Gothic works grow out of an ongoing series in which Delvoye applies traditional craft and folk art practices to various industrial objects. He has hand-painted gas canisters with blue Delftware windmill motifs, enameled ironing boards with medieval coat-of-arms, and worked with Indonesian woodcarvers to make a Baroque-styled teak cement truck.

Delvoye was born in 1965 in Wervik, Belgium, and lives in Ghent. He has had recent solo exhibitions at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Sperone Westwater, New York; Manchester Art Gallery, England; Musée de Art Contemporain de Lyon, France; and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. He has participated in major international exhibitions, including the 48th Venice Biennale (1999) and Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany (1992).

**The Walker Art Center is located at 725 Vineland Place,
at Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis, one block off Highway I-94.
For public information, call 612.375.7622.
Gallery hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 10 am–5 pm;
Thursday, 10 am–9 pm; Sunday, 11 am–5 pm; closed Monday.
<http://www.walkerart.org>**