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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New York City. January 18, 2017

Jordan Tate: *Prefaces* at Denny Gallery from January 26 to February 26, 2017

Denny Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Jordan Tate, *Prefaces*, running from January 26 to February 26, 2017. This is the artist's third exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition will feature photographs from Tate's newest body of work, *Prefaces*.

Justine Ludwig, Director of Exhibitions/Senior Curator at Dallas Contemporary wrote one of the essays included in *Prefaces* and *Appendices*, a two volume book published this past fall by Lodret Vandret.

(☪) This thread is leaking from the heavens

Jordan Tate's *Prefaces* is driven by the potential of the unrealized. At first glance Tate appears to have one of the strongest exhibition histories of any contemporary artist. It boasts installation shots of the Swiss Institute in New York, Pilar Corrias Gallery in London, Wiels in Brussels and even immaculate depictions of his work hanging in the Guggenheim. This is all artifice. These images are Tate's latest body of work titled *Prefaces*. For this series, he has constructed various works and then taken on the role of curator and created exhibitions. While composed solely in digital space, they read as pristine installation documentation, taken in physical space. In these photographs, light veils of shadow fall on perfect white walls and mirage-like reflections spread across high-shine gallery floors. Tate harnesses the power of the white cube as a validation, as a signifier of what is art of value.

Kierkegaard's *Prefaces*, which is comprised of introductions to unrealized novels, functions as the inspiration for Tate's series by the same title. Tate inverts this equation—creating final documentation for projects that have never existed in our present reality. They point to a possibility of endless realities. When asked to take a position on the 2015 fracture of boy band One Direction, Stephen Hawking surmised, "One day there may well be proof of multiple universes ... and in that universe Zayn is still in One Direction." Likewise, a reality exists in which Tate has realized all his *Prefaces* in physical space.

Conversation about contemporary art is often closely tied to the subject of its market. For over a decade, rumors of a soon to burst bubble that has yet to meet its apex, have been making headlines. Speculative markets and art purchased solely as investment have become the norm among the business set. Exhibition history and illustrious collector bases have come to drive valuation in a highly subjective field. Tate subverts market focus by establishing a final product that implies the potential of his work with a wink. He also grants himself the opportunity to create timely and quippy projects that could not take place within a physical gallery space.

In essence, Tate is cutting out the middleman. He takes on the role of cultural producer and institution. Tate dictates exactly the manner in which the work is presented. The project poses the question, which is more important—the product or the documentation? He also validates the prevalence of imagined space. These images are constructed digitally, allowing for meticulous staging—ranging from atypically shaped frames to ambitious sculptural forms. Tate takes advantage

of easily consumable imagery such as art historical reference and meme culture. Memes are any piece of media that is spread through the Internet through mimicry. These visual cues become rabbit holes, as they are constantly being remixed and redefined. Tate taps in using three popular keystroke emoticons that have become memes through widespread use. These smileys, known as Lenny Face (ಠ_ಠ), Shruggie ~\(\ツ)/~, and look of disapproval ಠ_ಠ, are used to express complex emotional reactions quickly, often as a means to antagonize other users on message boards. The Lenny Face keystroke emoticon debuted on a message board discussing whether spam detector settings needed to be changed to keep bot programs from taking over discussion threads. One user responded “(ಠ_ಠ) this thread is leaking to the heavens.” The image has become a go-to for Internet trolls, subsequently posted ad nauseam.

Tate treats historical images and artifacts as memes—piratable, to be proliferated. Through alteration and presentation, iconic works are remade. On Kawara’s date paintings are particularly meme ready; created between 1966 and 2013, he documented each day with its date painted in white on a monochromatic background. Tate appropriates the style of On Kawara’s work and superimposes it on to a New Yorker cartoon featuring a man and woman at a restaurant, bearing the words, “You know I coined the phrase Post-Internet Art...” Tate combines the art historical with the Internet aware, creating a hybrid language. There is an understanding in his work that most individuals only view exhibitions and famous works of art via the Internet. Through merging the language of art history and digital space, Tate speaks in the vernacular.

Prefaces is an endless body of work with few rules and many possibilities. It is driven by this potential energy. Pop culture anecdotes can be the raw material that Tate pulls from to create these images. In *Andre and Sam*, individually framed likenesses of professional wrestler and actor André René Roussimoff (better known as André the Giant) and playwright Samuel Beckett are presented in a white cube. This piece refers to the unexpected relationship between the two. Beckett drove Roussimoff to school when he grew too large to travel to school by bus. Tate’s photographs teem with these referential wormholes. It is a way of sharing information akin to how we discover and learn via the Internet—seemingly incongruous narratives give way to one another.

Tate harnesses the power of digital space, culminating in a body of work that speaks to the here and now. His images evoke the contemporary dynamics of the art market while simultaneously speaking our new language of the Internet age. *Prefaces* challenges what photography can be and brings to light the tension between art object and art documentation. Perhaps by engaging in all of these contrasting binaries, Tate is trolling us.

Jordan Tate (born 1981 in Louisville, Kentucky) is an Associate Professor of Art at the University of Cincinnati. He has a Bachelor of Philosophy in Interdisciplinary Studies from Miami University and a Master of Fine Arts in Photography from Indiana University. He was a Fulbright Fellow in 2008-2009. Tate’s work is currently held in collections nationwide, including Rhizome at the New Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Photography, The Fred and Laura Bidwell Collection, the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Columbus Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Tate has exhibited at the the Transformer Station (Cleveland, OH), SPRING/BREAK Art Show (NYC), Denny Gallery (NYC), Galerie Christophe Gaillard (Paris, France), Higher Pictures (NYC), The Photographers Gallery (London, UK), and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland.

Please join us for an opening reception for the artist, Jordan Tate, on Thursday, January 26, from 6 to 8 p.m. and for an Artist Talk and Book Party on Saturday, January 28, from 4 to 6 p.m. (Talk will commence at 4:30 p.m.) Denny Gallery is located at 261 Broome Street in New York City. The hours are Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Monday by appointment. For further information, contact Elizabeth Denny or Robert Dimin at 212-226-6537 or by email at elizabeth@dennygallery.com or robert@dennygallery.com.