

John Waters for the holidays!

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The trash-master himself chats up the season before his one-man Christmas show in Portland

Whatever you know about John Waters, what you might not expect is that he is one of the funniest people to have a conversation with. He is open, honest, compassionate and full of effervescent enthusiasm and curiosity toward understanding the human condition.

He was born in and continues to maintain a residence in Baltimore, Md. — the setting for most all of his films. As a teenager, Waters began making 8-mm underground movies. Waters made his first film, an 8-mm short, "Hag in a Black Leather Jacket" in 1964. Over the course of the next decade, he would release a handful of underground films that would culminate in 1972 in the creation of what would arguably become the most "notorious" film in the American independent cinema, "Pink Flamingos." In the late '80s, Waters burst into Hollywood, with his first box office success, "Hairspray."

He taught in the prison system for many years, he has written half a dozen books (with a new book

John Waters stars in A John Waters Christmas, Dec. 6, at the Aladdin Theater in Portland. His new book, "Carsick" will be published in June 2014.

coming out in June 2014), he has acted in and directed numerous films, and he has been traveling with his spoken word performances for decades. Waters will bring his Christmas show to the Aladdin Theater on Dec. 6. I asked him what Portlanders can expect.

John Waters: Hopefully they can expect a very prepared, well edited kind of self-help group on how you can get through Christmas — if you love it, if you hate it, if you dread it or if you are offended by it politically, religiously.

Sue Zalokar: With no shortage of dirty Santa comments, I'm guessing.

J.W.: If you are sitting there dressed as Santa

Claus, looking at yourself in the mirror and making out with yourself, this show is for you. I have a way for every kind of person (to enjoy my Christmas show). If they think Santa's erotic, if they think the elves are twinks, if they think they want to dress up as Joseph and join a living nativity scene (which I'm very against). I talk about everything Christmas: music, fashion, everything!

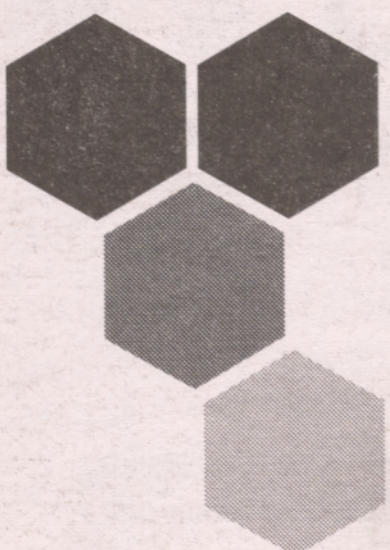
S.Z.: What are your objections to a living nativity scene?

J.W.: I find them very scary. I look at them beyond a Diane Arbus photo. And I always think, well first of all, what parent would allow their child to be baby Jesus where there are probably perverts dressed up. And then there are live mules in there that kick, and straw with people holding candles. Didn't you ever see the movie "Susan Slade" where Connie Stevens' baby catches on fire and Troy Donahue puts it out?

But I go look at living nativities. I'm obsessed by

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