

Art

Over 80 artists reflect on today's entertainment-driven consumer society



CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In today's entertainment-driven consumer society we are surrounded by a massive overflow of visual stimuli – a sea of images and information generated by television, movies, newspapers, magazines, cartoons, billboards and commercial packaging that transforms our everyday life into an endless loop of multi-sensory spectacles and fictions. The Portland Art Museum's international exhibition Let's Entertain, on view through September 17, 2000, features work by some artists from 17 countries focused on the influences of entertainment on art practices.

Organized by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Let's Entertain revolves around the complex relationship

between pleasure, spectacle, popular culture and contemporary art through a diverse selection of artworks incorporating sculpture, painting, video, installation, sound, the Internet, fashion and games. These artists use entertainment strategies as a means of critiquing our pleasure-based culture, as well as a way to employ a common language, a shared culture.

From Cindy Sherman's seminal series Untitled Film Stills (1977-1980) to Piotr Uklanski's disco dance floor, many pieces investigate and challenge the role that popular media and amusements have played in our lives. Also included are episodes of the cable television

programs "Andy Warhol's TV" (1981) and "Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes" (1987) that feature 1980s celebrities ranging from Divine to Debbie Harry, and a pioneering video work by Dara Birnbaum, Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman (1987-1979), which manipulates and reinterprets clips from the popular television series.

In the past 25 years, artists have explored entertainment icons as emblems of voluptuous abandon or subtle melancholy. On view in the exhibition are Jeff Koons' polychromed wood Buster Keaton

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