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***Peter Hujar: Speed of Life* completes the winter 2019 exhibition program at the Wexner Center for the Arts**

“Hujar’s photography memorializes and monumentalizes acts of tenderness and moments of vulnerability, things that lately feel less and less practicable and, for that reason, more and more important.”—*Artnet*

August 7, 2018—Columbus, OH—February 2—April 21, 2019, the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University complements its exhibition of *John Waters: Indecent Exposure* with ***Peter Hujar: Speed of Life***. The exhibition of 140 photographs by the enormously influential late artist was organized by the Morgan Library and Museum in New York and Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid, and will make its only Midwest appearance at the Wex.

“Hujar’s commitment to his artistic vision made everything else secondary—commercial success, mainstream recognition, personal relationships,” explains Curator at Large Bill Horrigan, who organized the exhibition’s presentation at the Wex. “It’s only now, with the perspective of three decades, that he’s recognized as having given form and face to a certain place and time within late 20th-century America.”

Drawn from the holdings of the Morgan and nine other institutions, the show reveals the full scope of Hujar’s career, from his beginnings in the mid-1950s to his central role among the artists, musicians, and drag performers in the East Village art scene three decades later, until his death in 1987 at the age of 53 from AIDS-related complications.

Shown in a single-gallery installation that reflects Hujar’s own thoughts on the presentation of his varied bodies of work and the feeling of intimacy captured in each, the superb black-and-white photographs illustrate the sensitivity and piercing insight Hujar brought to a range of subject matter.

Speed of Life features extraordinary studies of the nude form and Hujar’s best-known works of portraiture. These include his 1969 poster of LGBT activists arm-in-arm for the Gay Liberation Front, images from the 1970s of John Waters and writers Susan Sontag and Fran Lebowitz in languid reclining poses, and a luminous shot of Warhol superstar Candy Darling in her hospital bed shortly before her death in 1974

The quiet, guileless sense of grandeur in his portraiture also colors his images of the skyscrapers and abandoned buildings of New York City and ever-changing bodies of water like the Hudson River. Hujar’s portraits and cityscapes are accompanied by his photographs of domestic and farm animals, each image exuding the empathy of the artist and the dignity of his subject.

In Hujar's words, he made "uncomplicated, direct photographs of complicated and difficult subjects." The exhibition reflects his unparalleled success with that approach, but also his innate ability to identify and immortalize important moments, creatures, and subcultures as they passed at the speed of life.

Peter Hujar: Speed of Life is organized by the Morgan Library & Museum, New York, and Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid. The exhibition is curated by Joel Smith, Richard L. Menschel Curator and Department Head at the Morgan Library & Museum. The Wexner Center for the Arts presentation is organized by Bill Horrigan, curator at large.

About Peter Hujar

Peter Hujar was a leading figure of the downtown New York scene of the 1970s and '80s. He is best known for his portraits of New York City's artists, musicians, writers, and performers, which feature characters such as Susan Sontag, William S. Burroughs, David Wojnarowicz, and Fran Leibovitz and was admired for his completely uncompromising attitude toward work and life. A consummate technician, his images of people, animals, and landscapes, with their exquisite black-and-white tonalities, have become extremely influential.

Since his death from AIDS-related complications in 1987, Hujar's work has been the subject of a major retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland. His work is included in permanent collections at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. The Morgan Library & Museum is the repository of the Peter Hujar Collection, including over 100 prints and 5700 contact sheets as well as the artist's correspondence and papers.

Exhibition-related events

A **Winter Exhibition Preview** will take place on Friday, February 1. More details and events will be announced closer to the exhibition's opening.

Visitor Information

Peter Hujar: Speed of Life will be on view February 2–April 21, 2019, at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St. (at 15th Avenue) on the campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus.

Gallery hours are 11 AM–6 PM Tuesday–Wednesday, 11 AM–8 PM Thursday–Saturday, and 11AM–6 PM Sunday. Galleries are closed Mondays. Admission is \$8; \$6 for seniors and Ohio State faculty and staff; free for Wexner Center members, college students, and visitors 18 and under; free Thursdays 4–8 PM and the first Sunday of the month.

More info on bus routes, parking, and other visitor information is available [here](#) or at (614) 292-3535.

Exhibition Support

Free and low-cost programs at the Wexner Center are presented with support from **Huntington Bank** and **Cardinal Health Foundation**.

The Wexner Center receives general operating support from the **Greater Columbus Arts Council**, the **Ohio Arts Council**, **The Columbus Foundation**, and **Nationwide Foundation**.

Generous support is also provided by the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation** and **Wexner Center members**.

About the Wexner Center

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement for contemporary art.

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