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The Wexner Center for the Arts unveils *John Waters: Indecent Exposure* on February 2, 2019

Multidisciplinary art space is one of only two venues to present the first full retrospective of Waters's visual art

August XX, 2018—Columbus, OH—For its winter 2019 season, the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University welcomes back a longtime friend, John Waters, for the first major retrospective of his visual art.

John Waters: Indecent Exposure, on view **February 2 through April 21, 2019**, reveals how Waters has transmuted his personal obsessions into a singular body of work through more than 160 photographs, sculptures, sound works, and moving image pieces. Organized by The Baltimore Museum of Art, the exhibition will debut there in October 2018 before its presentation at the Wexner Center, the only other venue to host it.

In 1999, the Wex's *John Waters: Photographs* was the artist's first one-person museum exhibition. The relationship between the artist and the center's director and curators has continued over time, with Waters serving on the center's International Advisory Council. He also served, together with Wex director Sherri Geldin, for nearly 10 years on the board of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Waters participated in the center's 2008 Lambert Lecture during the exhibition *Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms*. He was among the artists depicted in the Wex's 2012 exhibition, *Annie Leibovitz*, and his image was even more strikingly foregrounded in 2015's *Catherine Opie: Portraits and Landscapes*. A portrait of Waters will also be featured in the other exhibition on view at the Wex this winter: *Peter Hujar: Speed of Life*.

"I'm really excited to have my show coming here right from The Baltimore Museum [in] my hometown," Waters said during a recent visit to the Wex.

In Waters's first artwork, *Divine in Ecstasy* (1992), he captured a moment of rapture from his favorite muse in his 1970 film *Multiple Maniacs* by pointing a still camera at a television screen. The piece forms a unique link between the rarefied world of contemporary art and the most relatable form of watching, and Waters has deftly traversed the spectrum of taste and cultural reference in his practice ever since. Drawing from his experiences with film and his fascination with celebrity, crime, religion, and popular culture, the artist subverts mainstream expectations of representation and entices viewers with his astute, provocative, and wickedly funny observations about society.

John Waters: Indecent Exposure is organized around themes of pop culture, the movie industry, the contemporary art world, the artist's childhood and identity, and the transgressive power of images. In addition to photo assemblages that build new narratives from stills of existing movies, the exhibition features highlights such as a

photographic installation in which Waters explores the auras and absurdities of famous films, their directors, and actors; a suite of photographs and sculpture that use humor to humanize dark moments in history from the Kennedy assassination to 9/11; and *Kiddie Flamingos*, a 2014 video work of children reading a G-rated version of *Pink Flamingos*, Waters's notorious 1972 celebration of all things outsider and extreme.

Other bodies of work represented in the exhibition include Waters's renegade versions of abstractions, still lifes, and readymades and iconic cult film images that constitute a photographic reunion of Waters's first collaborators, the actors and crew of Dreamland Productions. The exhibition also presents a selection of ephemera and some of Waters's earliest films screened in a peep-show format.

Notes Wex director Sherri Geldin, "We're thrilled to bring *John Waters: Indecent Exposure* to Wexner Center audiences, allowing them an in-depth look at all the ways—aside from his classic cult films—that John has both reveled in and cast a bemused eye on the perversities of human nature. That he manages to do so with such wit, compassion, and indulgence makes him among the most incisive yet generous of cultural commentators and a sheer delight to be around."

About John Waters

It's been more than 50 years since John Waters (American, b. 1946) filmed his first short, *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket* (1964). The set was the roof of his parents' Baltimore home, and the action, shot on stock stolen by a friend, involved an interracial marriage. By the early 1970s, influenced by the experimental films of Andy Warhol, Jack Smith, and George and Mike Kuchar, Waters was presenting his work in underground cinemas. Over the following decades, his reputation as an uncompromising cultural force has grown not only in the cinematic field but also through his visual artwork, writing, and performances.

As a visual artist, Waters has had numerous solo and group exhibitions since 1992. A complete retrospective, *John Waters: Change of Life*, opened at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York in 2004 and traveled to the Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland, the Orange County Museum of Art in Los Angeles, and The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. His work has also been exhibited at venues including Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York; Sprüth Magers, Berlin; Albert Merola Gallery, Provincetown; Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans; Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco; and Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles. Waters was invited to guest curate an exhibition at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 2011–2012 as part of their ongoing project *Event Horizon* and his *Absentee Landlord* exhibition was held over by popular demand. Waters's work is in the collections of The Baltimore Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

Exhibition-related events

A Winter Exhibition Preview will take place on Friday, February 1.

On Monday, March 18, at 7 PM, Waters and author and critic Lynne Tillman will take part in an onstage conversation for the 2019 **Lambert Family Lecture**.

More details and events will be announced closer to the exhibition's opening.

Visitor Information

John Waters: Indecent Exposure 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 of contemporary art.

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