

SILVERMAN

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TV Honey

Desiree Holman with Lynda Benglis and Joan Jonas.

Curated by Larry Rinder

October 11 - November 10, 2007

Opening reception: October 11, 7-10pm



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T.V. Honey

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Open Wednesday - Saturday, 11 - 6pm & by appointment.

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TV Honey brings together three artists whose work explores the hypnotic allure of the spectacle as it is embodied in performance, narrative, and, media representations. The exhibition also builds a bridge between two generations of artists, featuring two videos from the 1970s--Lynda Benglis' "The Amazing Bow Wow" (1976) and Joan Jonas' "Vertical Roll" (1972)--along with Desiree Holman's recently completed project, "The Magic Window."

Holman's "The Magic Window" (2006-2007) consists of a three-channel video projection as well as a group of related drawings. The projection juxtaposes two living-room scenes using characters loosely based on well-known sitcom families-- the Connors from Roseanne and the Huxtables from The Cosby Show. Holman's actors wear poorly fitting masks devised by the artist that foreground the wearers' crude inhabitation of these imaginary characters. By emphasizing the artifice of the narrative, Holman forestalls our inclination to identify with media avatars and lose ourselves in the absorptive power of the spectacle. The characters themselves, however, succumb to the TV's potent allure as they

gather on their family couches to stare into the televised abyss. In a hopeful twist, however, Holman has both families join in a psychedelic Bollywood-style dance number incorporating music by Soft Pink Truth.

Holman's meticulous colored pencil drawings focus on the television set and masks, both used as props in the video. Isolated from the narrative, the fetish-like nature of these objects—their role as "conduits of fantasy"—becomes apparent.

Holman describes her work as "[weaving] back and forth stylistically between an American sitcom television production and a D.I.Y. (Do It Yourself) video art sensibility." The DIY video art sensibility is well-represented by the two early works of Lynda Benglis and Jonas Jonas. Both of these pieces, like Holman's "The Magic Window," are concerned with identity and absorption, though Benglis explores this subject primarily through narrative and Jonas primarily through imagery and form.

Lynda Benglis' "The Amazing Bow Wow" (1974)—an exceedingly eccentric piece of 1970s video art—relates the story of a human-sized hermaphroditic dog that becomes the centerpiece of a traveling freak show. The alluring spectacle of the dog's peculiar sexuality attracts customers but its owners come into conflict when they discover that the creature is also extremely intelligent. While one of the owners, Rexina (played by Benglis herself), becomes more and more drawn to the dog, her partner and lover, Babu, becomes jealously enraged. Babu's anger culminates in a horrific scene where, believing he is castrating the dog, he mistakenly cuts off its tongue. Benglis' video humorously twists the Oedipal narrative while metaphorically challenging our gawking absorption in the spectacle of art itself.

Joan Jonas' "Vertical Roll" (1972) is simultaneously absorbing and disturbing. Jonas herself appears as a masked woman and belly dancer, whose presence is compromised by the constant and unnerving "vertical roll" of the video frame. The repetitive stuttering of the video image has a hypnotic effect, echoed by the image and sound of a swinging spoon striking a hard surface. Jonas' character's sexuality is also harnessed to maintain the viewers' attention; however, the fragmented form of the video medium ultimately functions like the masks in Holman's work, distancing us from the object of our projected desire. Like both "The Magic Window" and "The Amazing Bow Wow," "Vertical Roll" is enlivened by a momentary dance scene.

Desirée Holman is an interdisciplinary artist who lives and works in Oakland, CA. Her work explores human relationships & group dynamics (primarily families) through the use of fantasy play with figurative props such as mannequins and full-body wearable sculptures. In 1999, directly after completing her BFA in sculpture at California College of the Arts, Desirée attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She graduated with her MFA from UC Berkeley

in 2002. While at UCB, she received Eisner awards in both video and photography. Her work has generated critical acclaim in multiple reviews and exhibition catalogues.

In 2004, she was a Santa Fe Center for Photography's Vision Project Competition Winner. In recent years, her work has been the focus of solo exhibitions at YYZ Artist's Outlet in Toronto, Canada, Chicago's Lisa Boyle Gallery, San Francisco's Queens Nails Annex and the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery. Her work has been exhibited at the L.A. County Museum of Art, San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts & New Langton Arts; the Berkeley Art Museum; UC Davis' Nelson Gallery & Fine Arts Collection, The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Syracuse University, Los Angeles' Loyola Marymount University; Milan, Italy's BnD Studios and Toronto, Ontario's The Drake. Holman is also an arts educator and has taught at California College of the Arts, Maine College of Art, UC Berkeley, St. Mary's College of California and Diablo Valley College.

Joan Jonas is a pioneer of video/performance art. Her experiments and productions in the late 1960s and early 1970s were essential to the formulation of the genre. Her influence was crucial to the development of contemporary art in many genres--from performance and video to conceptual art and theater. During the past decade, Jonas has collaborated with composers such as Alvin Lucier to develop collaborative video-performance works, and has performed and toured with The Wooster Group. Her most recent work continues to explore the relationship of new digital media to performance. Jonas's recent installation piece, The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things (2004-2005) will be presented at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive from October 13, 2007 to July 31, 2008.

Jonas has been awarded fellowships and grants for choreography, video, and visual arts from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the CAT Fund, the Artist TV Lab at WNET/13 (New York City), the Television Workshop at WXX1 (Rochester), and the Deutsche Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) in Germany. Jonas has received the Hyogo Prefecture Museum of Modern Art Prize at the Tokyo International Video Art Festival, the Polaroid Award for Video, and the American Film Institute Maya Deren Award for Video. In 1994, Jonas was honored with a major retrospective exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in which she transformed six performance works into installations for the museum. She has recently had solo exhibitions at Rosamund Felsen in Los Angeles and the Pat Hearn Gallery in New York City.

An important sculptor for more than three decades, Lynda Benglis also produced a pioneering body of feminist video in the 1970s. Immediate and visceral, Benglis' performance-based video work confronts issues raised by feminist theory, including the representation of women, the role of the spectator, and

female sexuality. Benglis also engaged the emergent practice of video in an incisive discourse on the production of the moving image. Experimentation and humor also characterize Benglis' works; her manipulation of early video's intrinsic qualities suggests a playful yet critical approach to the emergent technology, imparting a deliberate sense of amorphousness and a willful lack of narrative logic. ___Benglis was born in 1941. She received a B.F.A. from Newcomb College. Her work has been shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Venice Biennale, among many other venues. She has been awarded two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship and an Australian Art Council Award. She has taught at the School of Visual Arts, the University of Arizona, Yale University, Princeton University and the California Institute of the Arts, among other schools. ___Benglis lives in New York City.

Lawrence R. Rinder is the Dean of the College at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Previously, he was the Anne and Joel Ehrenkrantz Curator of Contemporary Art at the Whitney Museum of American Art where he organized exhibitions including "The American Effect," "BitStreams," the "2002 Biennial," and "Tim Hawkinson," which was given the 2005 award for best monographic exhibition in a New York museum by the United States chapter of the International Association of Art Critics. Prior to the Whitney, Rinder was founding director of the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, in San Francisco, and served as Assistant Director and Curator for Twentieth-Century Art at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Among the many exhibitions he organized at these institutions are "Searchlight: Consciousness at the Millennium" (1999), "Knowledge of Higher Worlds: Rudolf Steiner's Blackboard Drawings" (1997), "Louise Bourgeois: Drawings" (1996), "In a Different Light" (1995) ""Felix Gonzalez-Torres" (1994), and "Where There Is Where There: The Prints of John Cage" (1989).

Rinder received a B.A. in art from Reed College and an M.A. in art history from Hunter College. He has held teaching positions at UC Berkeley, Columbia University, and Deep Springs College. He has published poetry, fiction, and art criticism in *Zyzyva*, *Fresh Men 2: New Voices in Gay Fiction*, *Flash Art*, *Artforum*, *nest*, *The Village Voice*, *Fillip*, and *Parkett*. *Art Life: Selected Writings, 1991-2005*, published by Gregory R. Miller and Company in Spring 2006, is his first book of essays. His first play, "The Wishing Well," co-authored with Kevin Killian, premiered in 2006. In 2003, Rinder was inducted into the National Register of Peer Professionals of the U.S. General Services Administration, and in 2005, he was appointed to the San Francisco Arts Commission by Mayor Gavin Newsom.

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