

For Immediate Release

January 10, 2003

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BIG ART GROUP OFFERS RIOTOUS GLIMPSE OF THEATER'S FUTURE

***SHELF LIFE* USES "REAL-TIME FILM" TO SKEWER AMERICAN CONSUMERISM**

"Extraordinary new production...confirms the troupe's standing as one of New York's most innovative companies." —*Next Magazine*

Rising young New York theater company **Big Art Group** brings its loopily engaging ***Shelf Life*** to the Wexner Center **January 30–February 1** in the black box format on the Mershon Auditorium stage. *Shelf Life* uses live video imagery and live action to skewer America's rampant obsession with possessions. Called "a whirling send-up of materialism run amok" by *Back Stage Magazine*, the show parodies our shop-'til-you-drop consumerism through the giddy interplay of its cast of wigged-out Gen-Y'ers keen to acquire things, more things...and maybe each other. *Shelf Life*, which marks the Columbus debut of Big Art Group, offers a zoom-in, close-up view of the next generation of imaginative talent.

SPLIT SCREENS

Director Caden Manson founded Big Art Group in 1999 to aggressively attack the boundaries of performance and art. They developed "Real-Time Film"—using live performance and video simultaneously—to examine the use of image in entertainment: how we experience different layers of reality. Big Art Group has won rabid fans in New York's Downtown scene with ingenious and hysterical productions that split the audience's attention between the multiscreen video projections at the front of the stage created by the antics of the actors partially screened behind them. Manson received the 2001 grant from The Foundation for Contemporary Performance Art for his work with Big Art Group and received a Pew Fellowship in 2002.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

While at the Wexner Center, the members of Big Art Group will meet with students in Ohio State's Department of Theatre to discuss their innovative approach to integrating media imagery with live theater and the challenges facing young U.S.-based theater ensembles today.

EVENT SUPPORT

Major support for the Wexner Center's 2002–03 performing arts season is provided by **Bank One** and the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**.

Support for the theater season is provided by **Philip Morris Companies Inc.**

Additional season support is provided by the **Ohio Arts Council** and the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation**.

This presentation of **Big Art Group** is one of a series of programs designed by the **National Performance Network (NPN)**. NPN is an independent organization begun by **Dance Theater Workshop** and is comprised of arts organizations in 40 cities and 25 states. NPN is made possible through major funding from the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation** and the **National Endowment for the Arts** (a federal agency). For further information, visit the NPN website at www.npnweb.org or write: National Performance Network, P.O. Box 70435, New Orleans, LA 70172.

CALENDAR INFORMATION FOR BIG ART GROUP:

Description: New York theater company Big Art Group performs *Shelf Life*, a parody of American consumerism mixing live action and video, presented by the Wexner Center.

Date and time: Thursday–Friday, January 30–31 at 8 pm; Saturday, February 1 at 3 and 8 pm.

Running time: 90 minutes.

Location: Black box show on Mershon Stage, Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St. at 15th Ave. on the Ohio State campus.

Tickets: \$16 general public; \$14 Wexner Center members; \$10 OSU students.

Ticket outlets: Wexner Center, 614/292-3535; Ticketmaster outlets, 614/431-3600.

Public information: www.wexarts.org/pa/ or 614/292-3535.

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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. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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