

wexner center
for the arts

For Immediate Release
August 17, 2001

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**URBAN LIFE ON FILM: DUTCH ARTIST EVOKES SARAJEVO,
AMSTERDAM, AND NEW YORK IN MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION**

**WEXNER CENTER BRINGS LARGE-SCALE GALLERY PIECES BY
JOHAN VAN DER KEUKEN TO UNITED STATES FOR THE FIRST TIME**

"Film is not life, but it has to touch your life. It's a second life."—Johan van der Keuken

An exhibition of multimedia works documenting street life in New York, Amsterdam, and Sarajevo by Dutch artist Johan van der Keuken opens at the Wexner Center this fall. Known for his exquisitely shot images of urban settings around the globe, van der Keuken had an astonishing career as a documentary filmmaker and photographer, working in virtually every part of the world. His gallery works, which combine film, photography, and sound, have never been shown in the United States. "The idea," wrote the artist about these works, "is to use image, projection, sound, and visual instruments to create individual and distinct worlds and atmospheres."

The three installations at the Wexner Center are part of the series *The Body and the City*, created in collaboration with designer Jeroen de Vries, who will come to the Wexner Center to help install the exhibition. ***Johan van der Keuken: From The Body and the City***, curated by Bill Horrigan, the Wexner Center's curator of media arts, will be on view **September 18–December 30, 2001**. A series of van der Keuken's films, including *The White Castle*, shot partly in Columbus, will be screened. Details on this series and additional related events are listed on the attached sheet.

Johan van der Keuken: From The Body and the City has attracted wide international support from such organizations as the Mondriaan Foundation in Amsterdam; the National Endowment for the Arts; The Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York; and the Netherlands Culture fund of the Dutch Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Education, Culture, and Science.

Pronunciation: van der KOO-kin

news release

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Reflecting van der Keuken's international perspective, the three installations on view here are *New York/Colours on 42nd Street*, *Sarajevo/November 1993–November 1996*, and *Amsterdam/Two Streets*. These works, all produced in 1998, consist of multiple photographs and moving images on film and video, focusing on the individual set against documentary backdrops of urban scenes. Wrote *Artforum*, these environments “draw visitors into and out of the exhibition space, to transform spectators into active participants, and, ultimately, to recall the violence and chaos of ‘what’s happening on the street.’”

In van der Keuken's own words, following are descriptions of the three installations:

- *New York/Colours on 42nd Street*, featuring a wall of 32 large-scale color photographs, plus film: “On 42nd Street between Times Square and Eight Avenue, I came across a long row of shops, their roll-down shutters all closed and painted in bright colors. I spent hours on the sidewalk across from the roll-down shutters, photographing passers-by walking past the fields of color. With their own bright colors, they seemed to represent an entire society. In the exhibition, the photographs are arranged adjacent to each other to form a huge mosaic of colour fields with people in them, one big human chessboard. A flat surface with the feeling: The Old New World: America!”
- *Sarajevo/November 1993–November 1996*, incorporating black-and-white photographs and film: “In November, 1993, my friend and colleague Frank Vellenga and I went to Sarajevo to show several films at the festival held there amidst Serbian gunfire and sniper ambushes. We also shot a 14-minute film showing moments in the day-to-day life of a city under siege with the underlying question: What purpose does it serve to make a film in wartime? Our main character was Marijela Margeta, an architecture student who risked her life to attend all the films at the festival.”
- *Amsterdam/Two Streets*, featuring two series of black-and-white photographs: “Two ‘lanes’ of photographs that are technically and aesthetically very different are confronted with each other. They run parallel or cross each other, much as streets do. On one lane, pictures of Dam Street can be seen through ‘holes’ in the black surface of the photographs like keyholes, so the view is largely restricted. Dam Street in the old center of Amsterdam is populated by an odd mixture of old timers, tourists, dropouts, junkies, and dealers. The opposite lane consists of pictures of Haarlemmerdijk. An old-fashioned shopping street now characterized by enormous mobility: stores, snack bars and coffee shops come and go, premises are constructed and demolished. I have photographed

images of this street in layers one over the other, as multiple exposures with control and coincidence each playing an equal role.”

The Body and the City, a series of eight installations, has been exhibited in various combinations in Amsterdam, Paris, and Barcelona. New York’s Museum of Modern Art has hosted a retrospective of van der Keuken’s films this year, but his gallery installations have never before been exhibited in the United States.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Johan van der Keuken (1938–2001) emerged as an artist in 1955 with the publication of his first photography collection, *We Are 17*. After studying film in Paris, he embarked on a career as a documentary filmmaker and photographer, working in virtually every part of the world with retrospectives in Montreal, Paris (at the Centre Georges Pompidou), and Holland. The artist became known for his evocative images and films that revealed an interest in the global circulation of capital, the erosion of traditional ways of life, the divide between rich and poor, racial and religious conflicts, and the place of chance and control in photography and film.

Jeroen de Vries has been compiling and designing innovative photo and media exhibitions for more than two decades, most recently in the cities of Belgrade and Porto. He designed the recent catalogue of van der Keuken’s photographs, *The Lucid Eye*, available in the center’s Bookshop. He divides his time between Amsterdam and Belgrade.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Related events include a van der Keuken film series in November, gallery talks, and a lecture. See attached sheet for details.

ALSO ON VIEW

On view at the Wexner Center concurrently with the van der Keuken show is *Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas*, and *Franz West: 2Topia* in the Café and galleries.

Johan van der Keuken: From The Body and the City, in collaboration with Jeroen de Vries is presented at the Wexner Center with the support of the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York, the Netherlands Culture fund of the Dutch Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Education, Culture, and Science, and the Wexner Center Foundation.

The Body and the City is a production of Stichting Arts & Ex's (Sylvia Baan, general coordinator for Foundation Arts & Exs; Pieter van Huystee, director of Foundation Arts & Ex's; Paul Wijnheymer, technical supervisor, Foundation Arts & Ex's). *The Body and the City* project started as an initiative of Pieter van Huystee and the Amsterdam Cultural Center De Balie. Initial funding was provided, in part, by the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education, Culture and Science; Mondriaan Foundation; the Dutch Film Fund; the Amsterdam Art Fund; and the Foundation for the Visual Arts, Design and Architecture. The van der Keuken film series is presented with support from The Puffin Foundation and the Wexner Center Foundation.

CALENDAR INFORMATION: *Johan van der Keuken: From The Body and the City*

Description: Large-scale multimedia works evoking the street life of New York, Amsterdam, and Sarajevo, incorporating moving and still images by Dutch filmmaker/photographer Johan van der Keuken in collaboration with designer Jeroen de Vries.

Dates: September 18–December 30, 2001.

Location: Wexner Center galleries, 1871 North High Street (at 15th Avenue) on the campus of The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Gallery hours: 10 am–6 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; 10 am–9 pm Thursdays; 12 noon–6 pm Sundays.

Admission: \$3 general public; \$2 students/senior citizens/group; free for members and OSU students, faculty, and staff, and children under 12. Includes admission to *Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas*.

Opening events: Media lunch and opening reception September 20.

Public programs: Events include a film series in November, lectures, gallery talks, and tours; see attached sheet.

Parking: Convenient parking is available in the Ohio Union Parking Garage just south of the Wexner Center. Wheelchair access to the Wexner Center is available on the west side of the building, through the College Avenue entrance.

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

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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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