

wexner center
for the arts

For Immediate Release: May 22, 2002

Media contact: Karen Simonian, 614 292-9923 or simonian.4@osu.edu

**COLLABORATIVE PROJECT LED BY DUTCH ARTIST LETS KIDS
REINVENT THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS WITH COMPUTER
TECHNOLOGY**

**SECOND INSTALLMENT IN WEXNER CENTER'S *NOTATIONS* SERIES GOES
OFF-SITE—TO URBAN COMMUNITY CENTERS, A BUS, AND THE INTERNET**

Rotterdam artist Jeanne van Heeswijk is known for her site-specific, interactive projects that explore issues of art, community, and urban life. Her latest work, ***Face Your World***, extends beyond gallery walls and moves into Columbus community centers, onto a bus, and into cyberspace. In this participatory, high-tech project, children can reinvent their urban neighborhoods using digital cameras and a newly created computer program that allows for interaction with the art and each other. Developed for the Wexner Center in collaboration with the Greater Columbus Arts Council's (GCAC's) *Children of the Future* arts education program and COTA (Central Ohio Transit Authority), *Face Your World* will be active **June 17–August 16, 2002**, with an opening celebration outside the Wexner Center Sunday, June 30 from 3 to 6 pm.

Face Your World is part of the Wexner Center's ongoing series of *Notations*, site-specific projects in non-traditional spaces. Produced with a team of designers, software experts, and others, the project marks van Heeswijk's first major commission in the U.S.

THE PROJECT

Van Heeswijk's project, co-curated by Carlos Basualdo and the Wexner Center's Steve Hunt and developed in close collaboration with the Wexner Center's education staff, will allow children ages 6–12 to reconfigure their inner-city Columbus neighborhoods in the virtual world. For the project, a 22-seat COTA bus—custom-designed externally and internally by van Heeswijk—will be equipped with six computers and will function as a mobile work station. Three days a week, the bus will transport children, each bearing a *Face Your World* passport, between three GCAC

news release

Children of the Future sites, located at two Columbus Recreation and Parks centers and the Boys & Girls Clubs Westside Unit. At the sites, the children will take digital photographs of the surrounding neighborhoods and upload them into a newly created computer program developed by van Heeswijk in collaboration with V2_ Lab from The Netherlands and Dutch philosopher Maaïke Engelen. This program, called an “Interactor,” will be installed on the network of computers on the bus. The children will re-create their environments on the computer program using the pictures they’ve taken and 500 other digital images taken by van Heeswijk during her visits to Columbus. As they download pictures of restaurants, stores, benches, dogs, trees, and more to use in their virtual neighborhoods, each participant will interact with the other participants in the virtual world; a cartoon figure named Max Moore (named after the Columbus development official) and other characters will pop up to stop the game if a configuration looks amiss—e.g., two buildings atop each other.

The results of the children’s work will be posted on brightly colored kiosks—8-foot-high public sculptures made of polyurethane and fiberglass, with computer monitors—fabricated by Rotterdam designer Joep van Lieshout of Atelier van Lieshout. The kiosks, located at the three *Children of the Future* sites, will display images of the children’s work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The results, as well as a version of the computer game for web visitors, will also be available on www.faceyourworld.net.

CATALOGUE AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

A 150-page full-color softcover catalogue will be published at the end of the summer that will document the project and the children’s work. The catalogue will include essays by project co-curator Carlos Basualdo; project co-curator Steven Hunt, who will discuss the project in detail and its relationship to Dutch art history and Dutch contemporary art; University of Pennsylvania professor Reinaldo Laddaga, who will explore contemporary issues in public art; philosopher and project collaborator Maaïke Engelen; and Paris-based critic Brian Holmes. Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin will contribute an introduction. The catalogue will be designed by Roger Teeuwen, edited by Carlos Basualdo and Ann Bremner, published by the Wexner Center, and distributed through the Wexner Center Bookshop and through D.A.P. (Distributed Art Publishers), an international arts publication distribution organization.

A four-page newspaper-style exhibition guide will be published in conjunction with the project.

RELATED EVENTS

An opening party, free and open to the public, will be held Sunday, June 30 from 3 to 6 pm inside and outside the Wexner Center, with remarks at 4 pm. The *Face Your World* bus will be on display, and computers will be set up for guests to explore the game. Visitors will also have a chance to view *Mood River* in the galleries for the last time; admission to the galleries will be free all day.

The Wexner Center will provide regular speakers to discuss urban issues and city development for *Children of the Future* participants throughout the summer.

THE ARTIST AND HER COLLABORATORS

Jeanne van Heeswijk (pronounced ZHON-a von HEZH-wik) has garnered international attention for her site-specific installations and participatory pieces in Europe and the United States, often on the theme of urbanism. Her "Subway to the Outside" in New York, for instance, was a map, a TV show, an installation, and a discussion exploring the individual's interaction with the urban environment. Her *Draw a Line* in Tokyo was an interactive piece exploring the notion of territory and emphasizing Japan's lack thereof. The Wexner Center project marks van Heeswijk's first major commission in the United States. She has made three previous trips to Columbus to develop the piece, and will be on-site all summer.

Rotterdam designer **Joep van Lieshout** (Juhp von LEE-shout) has presented his work under the name **Atelier van Lieshout** to underline his collaborative process with the members of his studio. The Atelier creates "practical and functional" sculptures, including furniture, polyester body parts, mobile homes, and offices, which combine industrial standardization with a signature use of polyester resin painted with highly artificial colors.

Maaïke Engelen (MY-ka AN-ga-lin), a philosopher and poet completing her doctoral dissertation at the University of Amsterdam, has been involved with the development of *Face Your World*. She is investigating if and how philosophy can help children with a "problematic social background."

V2_Lab, which developed the computer game for *Face Your World*, is part of V2_Organization, founded in 1981 by a group of multimedia artists in The Netherlands. It focuses on the presentation of international developments in machine art, electronic and media art, and the web.

THE CURATORS

Carlos Basualdo is the Wexner Center's former chief curator of exhibitions who curated the first *Notations* project by Franz West and last fall's Hélio Oiticica exhibition. He is a co-curator of Germany's *Documenta XI* exhibition this summer. Steve Hunt is a doctoral student in art history at The Ohio State University who worked extensively on the Wexner Center's exhibition *As Painting: Division and Displacement* in the summer of 2002. Basualdo and Hunt worked closely with the staffs of the Wexner Center Education department, GCAC/*Children of the Future*, and COTA on this project.

NOTATIONS

Face Your World is the latest project in the Wexner Center's ongoing *Notations* series featuring site-specific, often participatory artists' projects in non-traditional gallery spaces. Adapted from ideas articulated in John Cage's seminal book of the same name, *Notations* further connects the Center with the Ohio State campus and Columbus by utilizing public spaces around the city.

Notations began in the fall of 2001 with *Franz West: 2Topia*, with tables, chairs, and other furniture designed by Austrian artist Franz West, on view and in use in the Wexner Center Café. *Face Your World* is the first in the *Notations* series to go off-site, coinciding with plans for the Center's gallery renovations. A future *Notations* will feature a text-based installation by Lawrence Weiner, installed in the bricks of Ohio State's South Oval, on view beginning in the fall of 2002.

CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE

This pioneering program—overseen by the Greater Columbus Arts Council's Community Arts Education Program in partnership with Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Columbus, Inc., and other collaborators—provides after-school safe havens for children, using the arts to teach “at-risk” children communication skills and conflict resolution. *Children of the Future*, which receives funding from AmeriCorps, is a drop-in program at nine community centers, with 28 local artists involved in leading activities. For more information on *Children of the Future*, visit www.gcac.org.

EVENT SUPPORT

Notations / Jeanne van Heeswijk: Face Your World is organized by the **Wexner Center for the Arts** in collaboration with the **Greater Columbus Arts Council's Children of the Future** program and **COTA**.

The artist's residency is presented with major support from the **Greater Columbus Arts Council**.

Major in-kind support is provided by the **Greater Columbus Arts Council's Children of the Future** program and **COTA**.

Additional support is provided by the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation**.

Special thanks to **The City of Columbus, Recreation and Parks Department** and the **Boy & Girls Clubs of Columbus, Inc.** for providing programming sites.

CALENDAR INFORMATION: Jeanne van Heeswijk: Face Your World

Description: Interactive project by Dutch artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, allowing children in urban community centers to reinvent their worlds via a computer game.

Dates: June 17–August 16, 2002 (free public reception June 30 at the Wexner Center, 3–6 pm; June 30 also final day for *Mood River*; gallery admission is free).

Locations: Three community centers, in conjunction with COTA and GCAC's *Children of the Future* Program: Blackburn Recreation Center (263 Carpenter St., on the near east side), Sawyer Recreation Center (1056 Atcheson St., on the near east side), Boys and Girls Clubs Westside Unit (115 S. Gift St., on the near west side). Results of the project and a version of the game can be viewed on the web at www.faceyourworld.net and via the Wexner Center web site (www.wexarts.org).

Media contact: Karen Simonian, Wexner Center, 614-292-9923 or simonian.4@osu.edu.

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.

The Wexner Center galleries will be undergoing renovations in mid-2002 through fall of 2003. Check the web site at www.wexarts.org for updates on programs and locations.

###30###