

PRESS COVERAGE



Robert Heinecken 1932-2006: Sex and food, a memorial exhibition

January 19 — March 24, 2007

1. Chicago Tribune, 3.8.2007
2. Gallery Guide, Jan.2007

ART REVIEW

2 of Heinecken's themes: Sex and food

Complementary exhibits by Keasler and Sultan

By Alan G. Artner
Tribune art critic

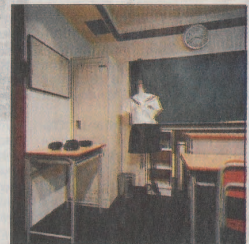
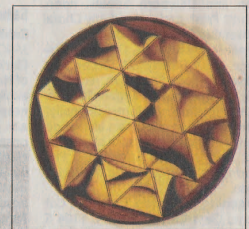
The abiding themes of the work of the late Robert Heinecken were food, sex and television, and a memorial exhibition — Heinecken died last May — at the Museum of Contemporary Photography has examples of the first two, with the second providing a clever link to concurrent shows for Misty Keasler and Larry Sultan.

Heinecken once called himself a "paraphotographer" in an attempt to pay homage to the photographic medium but acknowledge that, because he largely worked without a camera, he was up to something else. We now see he was a latter-day Dadaist who used images by others long before the practice became known as appropriation art.

The food pieces on view have the mild, good-natured quality he liked in much of his best work. One series follows a TV dinner

from its package to consumption by an unseen (low-budget) gastronome. Another creates eerily beautiful abstract compositions from such fast foods as sweet rolls and hamburgers. Perhaps the sharpest piece deconstructs an "Iconographic Art Lunch" from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All of these achieve unexpected elegance.

Heinecken told this writer that both his grandfather and father were clerics whose sexual indiscretions caused them to be driven from the ministry. The point of the telling was to indicate how Heinecken's artistic interest in sex was an open revelry in what his ancestors hid. But, of course, it was much more than that, as he was fascinated by such things as what weirdness latter-day America made from the sexual



Works on exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Photography include: "Back Yard, Woodland Hills, 2002" (above left) by Larry Sultan; "Multiple Solution Puzzle" (upper right) by Robert Heinecken; and "High School Room With Uniform" by Misty Keasler.

mythologies of ancient cultures and how, say, American fashion photography used many of the same techniques as pornography.

His "sex" essays are presumably the reason for the warning posted on the museum door, though while making use of pornographic imagery, the works are anything but titillating, being more in the spirit of the acidic collages of a Heinecken hero, Berlin Dadaist John Heartfield. When looking at these pieces, one might keep in mind that Heinecken felt America was "a losing country, morally and spiritually," and what he saw us making of sex was an interest-

ing, essential part of the story.

The works in the complementary Keasler and Sultan shows deal with environments in which sex takes place but which have been captured in, respectively, unpeopled and undramatic states. Keasler presents rooms in Japanese "love hotels," which are often as cheery as children's nurseries. Sultan shows homes rented in the San Fernando Valley for the making of adult films, with the owners' furnishings (plus the crew's large and small alterations) being as significant as the actors caught at rest or espied working on the periphery.

Various levels of taste are on show here, and it's that rather than anything more superficially exciting that makes the exhibitions excellent, deadpan companions for Heinecken. aartner@tribune.com

"Robert Heinecken: Sex and Food, a Memorial Exhibition," "Misty Keasler: Love Hotels" and "Larry Sultan: The Valley" continue at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave., through March 24; a curator's tour of the Heinecken show is scheduled for noon Thursday. 312-663-5554.

MoCP
Museum of
Contemporary Photography



Robert Heinecken

JANUARY 19 - MARCH 24, 2007

ALSO ON VIEW:

Larry Sultan: *The Valley* AND **Misty Keasler:** *Love Hotels*



MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
600 S. MICHIGAN AVE.
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Robert Heinecken, *Untitled #4*, from *Recto/Verso*, 1988

Larry Sultan, *Back Yard*, *Woodland Hills*, 2002, from *The Valley*, *Scalo*, 2004

Misty Keasler, *High School Room with Uniform*, 2005, from *Love Hotels*, Chronicle Books, 2006.

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CHICAGO | MICHIGAN AVENUE

LUMA: Loyola University Museum of Art

"The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama," thru Jan 14 | This multi-media art exhibition brings together 88 artists from more than 25 countries. Their work addresses themes related to compassion, peace, unity of all things, spirituality, people in exile & non violence. Richard Avedon, Chuck Close, Gabriela Morawetz, Juane Quick-to-see-Smith & Bill Viola are among the artists included in this exhibition. Organized by the Committee of 100 for Tibet & the Dalai Lama Foundation | "A Hidden Wholeness: The Zen Photography of Thomas Merton," thru Jan 14, features 35 photographs that reveal Merton's interest in Zen-like subject matter | Georges Rouault: "Misere et Guerre"; "Science & Faith Between Observance & Censorship: The Index of Forbidden Books," opening Feb 3 | The Museum is dedicated to the exploration, promotion & understanding of artistic expression that attempts to illuminate the enduring spiritual questions & concerns of all cultures & societies

820 N Michigan Ave
 (between Pearson & Chicago), IL, 60611
 312-915-7600 fax 312-915-6185
 www.luc.edu/luma
 tues 10-8 (free admission),
 wed-sun 10-5

Museum of Contemporary Art

"The Art of Richard Tuttle," thru Feb 4
 220 E Chicago, IL, 60611
 312-280-2660
 fax 312-397-4095
 www.mcachicago.org
 tues 10-8, wed-sun 10-5

Museum of Contemporary Photography

Jan 19-Mar 24: Robert Heinecken, who is perhaps best known for his assemblages of found images from torn magazine pages & for photographs containing familiar media iconography, continually redefined the role of photographer & perceptions of photography as an art medium. Heinecken died on May 19, 2006. In honor of his crucial contributions, the Museum presents an exhibition of selected projects: magazine alterations, a satire on fashion photography, & rarely seen Polaroid photograms using perishable food | Misty Keasler: "Love Hotels," & Larry Sultan: "The Valley"
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 www.mocp.org
 mon-fri 10-5, thurs 10-8, sat 12-5

