



MICHAEL SMITH BABY IKKI BIRTHDAY PARTY

Wednesday, June 18, 2008
6:30 pm

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)
535 West 22nd Street, 5th Floor
(between 10th & 11th Avenues)
www.eai.org

Admission free

For the first time in more than a decade, **Michael Smith** will stage a birthday party for his legendary character, Baby Ikki, in New York City at EAI. Conceived as a mute, ambiguous character fixed neither by age nor gender, Baby Ikki is an archetype with an unclear mission, onto which spectators project their own interpretations. During the performance, the perpetually 18-month-old Baby Ikki, played by Michael Smith, will celebrate his 33rd birthday.

During the birthday party, guests will mingle, play party games, and become active participants in Smith's performance. All of the time-honored birthday traditions from American childhood will be brought into play. Cake and refreshments will be served, guests will sing "Happy Birthday" to Baby Ikki and finally presents will be opened.

At times comedic, at times deeply unsettling, Baby Ikki breaks through social boundaries. Smith's diaper-clad character is much more than an exercise in infantilism. In character, Smith becomes an 18-month-old baby. He takes on all of the traits that dominate that stage of life. Lacking morals, consideration, and caution, Baby Ikki possesses an abundance of curiosity and selfishness and has an insatiable appetite for attention. Baby Ikki is a cranky explorer wandering in a new world. Not yet able to speak, frustration drives the baby to attempt communication using any means possible.

Party guests are welcome to bring age-appropriate gifts for Baby Ikki that will be incorporated into the performance. Refreshments will be served.

The retrospective *Mike's World: Michael Smith & Joshua White (and other collaborators)* opened at the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, Texas in 2007, and is currently on view at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia until August 3, 2008.

Michael Smith received a B.A. from Colorado College in 1973, and studied in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program. He has received numerous awards and grants, including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation. Smith's video works, performances and installations have been exhibited internationally at a range of venues, including Christine Burgin Gallery, New York; Leo Castelli Gallery, New York; Caroline's Comedy Club; Henson International Puppet Festival; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Hales Gallery, London; Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan and EDB Projects in Amsterdam. Smith is currently an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin and lives in Austin, Texas and New York.

Also at EAI:

MICHAEL SMITH + JOSHUA WHITE: Artists' Talk and Screening

Tuesday, June 17, 2008, 6:30 pm

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535 West 22nd Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011

Over the last 11 years, Michael Smith and Joshua White have collaborated on numerous videos and installations that incorporate Smith's deadpan and wide-eyed alter-ego, "Mike." At EAI, Michael Smith and Joshua White will screen works that they have produced together and speak about their long collaboration.

About EAI: Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is one of the world's leading nonprofit resources for video art and interactive media. EAI's core program is the international distribution of a major collection of new and historical media works by artists. EAI's activities include a preservation program, viewing access, educational services, online resources, and public programs such as exhibitions and lectures. The Online Catalogue provides a comprehensive resource on the 175 artists and 3,000 works in the EAI collection, including extensive research materials. www.eai.org

Please visit EAI's new project, The *Online Resource Guide for Exhibiting, Collecting & Preserving Media Art*, a comprehensive source for information on single-channel video, computer-based art, and media installation: <http://resourceguide.eai.org>

For more information about this event please contact: Josh Kline (josh@eai.org) (212) 337-0680 x17

Electronic Arts Intermix 535 West 22nd Street, 5th Floor New York, NY 10011

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