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For Immediate Release

Release Date:
April 23, 2008

Exhibition:
Michael Portnoy: Casino Ilinx

Curator:
Sarina Basta

Exhibition Dates:
May 4 – July 28, 2008

Opening Reception:
Sunday, May 4, 4-6pm

Gallery Hours:
Thursday – Monday, 11am-6pm

Admission:
\$5 suggested donation

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MICHAEL PORTNOY: CASINO ILINX

MICHAEL PORTNOY TRANSFORMS SCULPTURECENTER'S LOWER GALLERIES IN HIS FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION IN THE UNITED STATES

New York – SculptureCenter is pleased to present **Casino Ilinx** by **Michael Portnoy**. *Casino Ilinx* will be on view **May 4–July 28, 2008** with an opening reception on **Sunday, May 4, 2008 4-6pm**. “Director of behavior” and performance artist since 1995, Portnoy’s long-standing investigation of the poetics of humor and the rules of communication and play, takes form in *Casino Ilinx* as a series of gambling tables and related sculptures.

Drawing on gambling’s roots in ritual and divination, Portnoy’s tables are constructed of high and low materials including wood, mirror, sand, felt, bone, brass, vinyl, and shell. Influenced by gaming devices from various cultures and times, Portnoy’s objects take on a life of their own. When activated by games, the stylized sculptural pieces trigger experimental and experiential situations for the study of human behavior. “Rules” are imparted through riddles and gestures interpreted by players of each game. The rules and language associated with each piece shift constantly, challenging the viewer’s interaction with individual objects leading to dysfunctional, intimate, and absurd situations.

Portnoy explains, “the tables are supposed to be seductive, they appear like games that have been around for a long time for which no one was taught the rules. But the more closely you look, you see that the basic mechanisms of chance -- the role of the dice -- are compromised. You can’t roll the dice, at least not in the way you are used to.”

A new addition to Portnoy’s repertoire of gambling tables is *Tongue Pit (Linguistic Table)*, played within a perimeter of black sand. This particular game is composed of cryptic symbols and fragments of alphabets inspired from disappeared or endangered languages. These linguistic components are assembled into a frieze or disassembled to create a series of three-dimensional playing elements that form, in the words of the artist, “architectonic morphemes.” Glass dice are rolled to provide clues for possible configurations. The total scope of the game is revealed in the presence of the Director of Behavior.

As a whole, *Casino Ilinx* is composed of a series of moments, surprises, dead ends, and trap doors. The viewer must negotiate sporadic performers, sculptures such as a rabid cube, a squirrel escort, and other opaque symbols and rules. *Casino Ilinx* will be activated by scheduled and intermittent performances and gaming sessions throughout the exhibition. During exhibition opening visitors will be greeted by two “bouncers” and ushered into the gambling room. A croupier will lead each of Portnoy’s three abstract tables, instructing, coaxing, and hustling viewers into action.

Ilinx is defined by the sociologist Roger Caillois as a category of play that involves the pursuit of vertigo. Ilinx games “attempt to momentarily destroy the stability of perception and inflict a kind of voluptuous panic upon an otherwise lucid mind.” The exhibition *Casino Ilinx* is a journey into a fictional game

structure, constantly dissembled and rebuilt by the artist with the complicity of the players and fellow performers.

Michael Portnoy is a New York based multimedia artist. His diverse work spans dance, theater, experimental stand-up, and meta-functional sculpture. He has presented work in museums, galleries, theaters, and music halls internationally, including: ACE Gallery, Canada Gallery, Le Confort Moderne (Poitiers), Dexter Sinister, Deitch Projects, EFA Gallery, Kaaithheater (Brussels), The Kitchen, Kling & Bang Gallery (Reykjavik), Kunsthalle St Gallen Foksal Gallery Foundation (Warsaw), The Migros Museum (Zurich), The Moscow Biennial, The National Review of Live Art (Glasgow), P.S. 1/MOMA, The Grammy Awards at Radio City Music Hall, SculptureCenter, Tensta Konsthall (Stockholm), ThreeAsFour fashion shows, and White Box.

Thanks

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About SculptureCenter

Founded by artists in 1928, SculptureCenter is a not-for-profit arts institution dedicated to experimental and innovative developments in contemporary sculpture. SculptureCenter commissions new work and presents exhibits by emerging and established, national and international artists. In 2001, SculptureCenter purchased a former trolley repair shop in Long Island City, Queens. This facility, designed by artist/designer Maya Lin, includes 6,000 square feet of interior exhibition space, offices, and outdoor exhibition space.

For additional information or images, please contact Katie Farrell at
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