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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERIC WESLEY

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Bowie Van Valen is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition of Eric Wesley (born 1973 in Los Angeles, studied at UCLA 1992-1997, lives in Los Angeles). It is Wesley's first solo exhibition in the Netherlands.

Wesley's project for Bowie Van Valen is a further exploration of themes addressed in his installation for the last Whitney Biennial, which consisted of scale sets for a (faux) production of a reality television/sit-com "...so, this is Reality". In Amsterdam, parts of the original work will be re-configured, other parts raw from the previous show and a third element reveals a more abstract understanding of the project as a whole. The final product will consist of paintings and movies, sets and actors, grasped not in the original sense of the multiple terms, but as guerilla devices targeting television reality.

As a true schemer befits, for this show Wesley intends to undermine the status and significance of categories such as art and television. His project is to confront and break open the closed systems they represent. The motto for this new manifestation speaks for itself: "Into the wild blue yonder".

Wesley's practices have roots in a variety of media. He makes sculptures, paintings, drawings, architectural models as well as proposals for public works that use decrepit materials and convey funny ideas. Much of the work comes from a fascination for and unease with the American way of life. Wesley takes a specific interest in systems of production and how they produce "goods" and consequently how these "goods" make sense. These goods could be described as a result or reaction to the subservient behavior that keeps that system going. The artist speaks up in protest, recognizing that he may not be able to change the course of things but can stir up some trouble. In Kicking Ass (2000), a mechanized Ass (donkey) sculpture kicks holes in what appears to be the walls of a respectable art institute.

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The making of an "endless" burrito (Meyer Riegger Gallery, Karlsruhe), that of home-made land mines disguised as high-end interior design paint can (brand name: Ouchhi at Franco Noero gallery, Turino, Italy) and the growing, transfer and sale of tax free tobacco (Metro Pictures) in New York city were a specific concentration of ideas in 2002.

The shows can be explained as mockeries of the art system, but more important seems the fact that they refer to systems in a state of self-absorption, a metaphor for American culture at large. Wesley's work signifies but is not limited to a critical view of this: he is part of a lineage of critical American artists to which e.g. Robert Smithson, David Hammons, Paul McCarthy and Richard Jackson belong.

