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LISA KIRK
THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

May 26, 2004, 7-9pm
ONE NIGHT ONLY

On May 26, 2004, from 7-9pm, PARTICIPANT INC is pleased to present *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH*, a one-night performance event by LISA KIRK. Following her renegade curatorial projects, *YOU* (2003) and *THE OUTLAW SERIES* (2003), Kirk stages a confluence of performative tactics, culminating in an event that further interrogates the phenomenon of exhibition-making, redirecting her focus to the Barnum-esque role of the curator as author of spectacle. Following in a long history of artists' responses to monolithic curatorial enterprises and museum blockbusters, *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH* comprises Kirk's update of institutional critique gone awry.

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH enacts an exclusive door policy that requires viewers to sign and notarize a contract to enter an environment of theatrical fallout: a constant two-hour drumroll, circus animal sounds, trapeze artists swinging overhead, and champagne and cake all over the place. Together, these elements serve to dramatize the cacophony of the museum's social spectacle.

Previous projects such as *Spacebooty*, Kirk's slapstick response to identity politics, have addressed cultural and political trends, drawing parallels between the sex industry, fashion and contemporary art. From her mother's Chelsea loft to bookstore bathrooms, Kirk stages projects that challenge white box aesthetics and institutional elitism with democratic verve. An artist/activist, her work relies heavily on the theatricality of street and media activism. Her paintings and drawings often depict the gloved gesturing hands of puppetmasters and ringleaders, insinuating calls to action or mischief.

Upcoming projects include *Sympathetic Resonance*, a site-specific window installation at False Front (232 Front Street, South Street Seaport, NYC) in June 2004. A follow-up to *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH*, Kirk presents the aftermath via broken windows, like an opera singer's crescendo that cracks glass.

See www.lisakirkprojects.com for more information.

Lisa Kirk was born in Newport, RI in 1967 and was raised in the West Village of New York City. She received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts, NY in 1990 and her MFA from the University of California in 1992. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the National Library of Congress, The Long Beach Museum of Contemporary Art, and in New York City in the archives of White Columns and Artists' Space. She lives in New York and teaches at the Cooper Union School.

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 95 Rivington Street, between Ludlow and Orchard Streets on the Lower East Side.