



ART | EDWARD J. SOZANSKI

An energetic, commanding Jason Rhoades exhibition

Be prepared to be overwhelmed by Jason Rhoades. Be further prepared to be baffled, disgusted, delighted, amused, outraged, bored, and captivated by the exhibition devoted to his career at the Institute of Contemporary Art.

This first major U.S. museum show for the California native consists of four

multimedia installations, plus a few single pieces, that create total immersion in the artist's consciousness, and probably his subconsciousness as well.

Rhoades wanted his art to "shut you down; it should make you give up something." The ICA show certainly stops you in your tracks with a cascade of
See ART on H6



"The Creation Myth," a multimedia installation piece, is part of the Jason Rhoades show that occupies the entire Institute of Contemporary Art space.

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SUNDAY, OCT. 6, 2013 | THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER | H7



"My Madinah: In pursuit of my ermitage," an homage to female genitalia, tackles the subject of taboos and how people deal with them.

Continued from H6
most refined work, as if when Rhoades made it (in 2000) he was creatively downshifting to a slower gear.

The upstairs pieces are more soothing, more conventionally appealing as forms or environments. The downstairs pieces generate more emotional tension and more hubris, even arrogance, in terms of what the artist thinks he can achieve.

They're also more challenging as puzzles. The core of *Creation Myth* reveals itself to be a two-tiered structure made of folding tables. In the hollow center, functioning as the "brain" of a hypothetical body, Rhoades placed a desk chair and a large television set.

A sinuous red plastic "esophagus" trails off sinuously to a bulbous "stomach," while nearby, a smoke-puffing "volcano" symbolizes the inevitable climax of mental and physical digestion.

If the meaning of life isn't more life, Rhoades seems to be saying, then it's waste matter.

Rhoades was an artist very much full of himself, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. The painter who signed his pictures simply "Vincent" was driven by a similar

personality, and retrospectively, we admire him for it.

Rhoades was neither a towering intellect nor an aesthetic innovator, but he did create work that demands engagement on more than a superficial level and for more than momentary diversion. It should be seen.

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"Art" by Edward J. Sozanski and "Galleries" by Edith Newhall appear in alternate weeks.

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