

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ART | CRAFT | DESIGN  
**BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM**

### A fresh perspective on contemporary portraiture **ÜberPortrait at Bellevue Arts Museum** June 16 - October 18, 2009

**Bellevue, WA – Bellevue Arts Museum** offers a fresh perspective on contemporary portraiture with its new exhibition *ÜberPortrait*, on view June 16 through October 18, 2009. Comprised of over 30 works by locally, nationally and internationally celebrated artists, this unique exhibit examines the ‘portrait’ in all its facets – from individual likeness to overarching cultural identity. Working in a broad range of media such as sculpture, ceramics, photography, fiber, performance art and film, artists highlighted in *ÜberPortrait* share a common interest: exploring the age-old fascination with capturing a person’s likeness and/or recreating his or her identity, both as individual and a collective entity.

The work of eleven artists will be featured in *ÜberPortrait*. Ah Xian’s pierced and carved porcelain busts opulently decorated with traditional polychrome Chinese designs are born out of a sense of longing for his former motherland, China. Kukuli Velarde’s terracotta self-portraits, evocative of Pre-Colombian figurines and vessels of her native Peru, raise racial, social and cultural issues informing contemporary post-colonial societies, or as she puts it “the violent encounter between the European and the indigenous world.” Kate Clark’s beasts with human faces are hybrid creatures that both attract and repulse; they echo the insecurities of our human condition, wavering between instinct and rationality. Mixed-media artist Nick Cave focuses on the connotations of materials as means to constructing narratives with his wearable sculptures. Completely concealing the wearer’s identity, the artist allows the work to transcend preconceived notions of class, race and sexuality, all elements traditionally addressed by – and intrinsic to – portraiture.

As the name suggests, the artists in *ÜberPortrait* go beyond the traditional boundaries and limitations of a singular portrait or representation to capture a broader sense of cultural belonging – or even cultural longing. “The key to this exhibition lies in the craft media and techniques used by the artists,” says Curator Stefano Catalani. “Fraught with cultural, historical, racial, political and social associations, the artists blend, blur, if not erase, the representation of an individual through the depiction or construction of an overarching cultural reality. Craft (both as medium and technique) is thus recovered as a cultural signifier, and when still employed within the tradition, is energized through unexpected manifestations that require a new interpretation.”

Artists include: Nick Cave (IL), Kate Clark (NY), Sonya Clark (VA), John Grade (WA), Margot Quan Knight (WA), Ledelle Moe (MD), Darrel Morris (IL), Brian O’Doherty (A.K.A. Patrick Ireland; NY), Kukuli Velarde (PA), Dan Webb (WA) and Ah Xian (Australia).

*ÜberPortrait* is organized by **Bellevue Arts Museum** and curated by Stefano Catalani.

**Bellevue Arts Museum** is the Pacific Northwest’s center for the exploration of art, craft and design. A leading arts center on the Eastside, **BAM** celebrates regional, national and international artists working in a broad range of craft media, including ceramics, fiber, metal, wood and glass. The Museum also offers a unique array of free or low-cost educational programs such as artist demonstrations, lectures and workshops as well as a variety of engaging and fun hands-on kids activities.

[www.bellevuearts.org](http://www.bellevuearts.org)

For more information on this exhibit and other Museum-related programming or to schedule an interview with the artist, please contact Tanja Baumann (see contact information above). To download high resolution images, please go to [http://www.bellevuearts.org/about\\_us/press.htm](http://www.bellevuearts.org/about_us/press.htm) (password required).