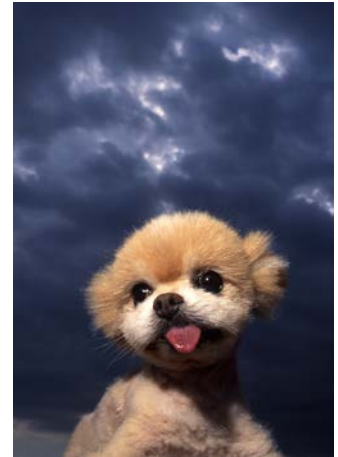


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Tuesday-Thursday and Saturday 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., Friday 11 a.m. – 9 p.m.

**For Immediate Release:**  
July 19, 2012

***Mr. Winkle: Object of Projection***  
**Photographs by Lara Jo Regan**  
July 6 – Oct. 20, 2012



#### **MUSEUM HONORS ONE OF WORLD'S FIRST CYBER STARS**

*Salt Lake City*—The Utah Museum of Contemporary Art is pleased to announce the exhibition *Mr. Winkle: Object of Projection*. Beneath the many interpretations of this fascinating creature is a real dog, a cult sensation who became an object of fascination for the world and the source of inspiration for Lara Jo Regan's photographic oeuvre that spans more than a decade.

Rescued from the side of the freeway in Bakersfield, California by Regan, a renowned documentary photographer based in Los Angeles, Mr. Winkle has since served as a muse and conduit for exploring the very nature of humanity. Her series of photographs draws connections between 19<sup>th</sup> century tableaux and portrait photography and 20<sup>th</sup> century photographic genres. Embracing the dog's unearthly qualities and chameleonic characteristics, Regan explores the ways that kitsch and ironic juxtaposition can incite dialogue about empathy, projection, human-animal relationships, and the nature of cuteness itself.

Featuring over 60 photographs, Regan's work is not just a clinical representation that ultimately led to the dog's fame; rather, the exhibition as a whole can be seen as the photographer's inspired relationship with an untraditional, non-human muse.

"Regan's photographs of Mr. Winkle create an incredible gateway to a wide array of discussions about contemporary culture and aesthetics – from our tendency to anthropomorphize and project upon animals, to the power of cuteness to destabilize a bad mood, to the finite details of professional photographic compositions," said curator Micol Hebron. "Regan's acute awareness of Mr. Winkle's power to stimulate both intellect and emotion is beautifully represented in the five series of images that are represented in this exhibition."

Through Regan's photographs published in books, calendars and online presentations, Mr. Winkle became an international cult figure in 2001, attracting record-breaking crowds on book tours. He is credited by many as being the first major internet celebrity, certainly the first four-legged variety. By 2002, mrwinkle.com had garnered over 40 million hits, and was named "Internet Celebrity of the Year" by Time Magazine's *On* publication. He has been the subject of hundreds of magazine articles and the guest on numerous television shows, including a featured appearance on *Sex and the City*. Unlike most internet sensations, interest in Mr. Winkle art has lasted over ten years, attesting to the breadth and depth of the work.

The opening of *Mr. Winkle: Object of Projection* will occur during UMOCA's monthly First Friday series on July 6, 8-10 p.m. First Fridays are a celebration of the contemporary art world with DJTiDY, food, a cash bar.

Other special events include:

Regan's award-winning film *Big Top Winkle* will be screened on July 7 at 1 p.m. Following the film will be a conversation between artist Lara Jo Regan and curator Micol Hebron about *Strategies of Cute: the many roles of Mr. Winkle as subject, muse, and object of projection*. Regan will sign her new book, *MR. WINKLE: The Complete Character Collection*.

In addition, *Big Top Winkle* will air every Saturday at 1 p.m. in the UMOCA auditorium July 7 through Oct. 20, free and open to the public.

Family Art Saturday on Sept. 8 from 2-4 p.m. will be Mr. Winkle-themed. Children and their families can stop by UMOCA with their favorite stuffed animal, create personalized accessories, and have a photo shoot with their favorite little friend.

*Mr. Winkle: Object of Projection* is presented by the Utah Arts Council.

### **About UMOCA**

*The award-winning Utah Museum of Contemporary Art exhibits groundbreaking artwork by local, national, and international artists. Five gallery spaces provide an opportunity for the community to explore the contemporary cultural landscape through UMOCA's exhibitions, films, events, classes, and presentations.*

*Founded in 1931, the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art has been recognized as Best Museum in the State of Utah for 2011 and 2012 and is a four-time recipient of funding from the Andy Warhol Foundation.*

*Located at 20 S. West Temple; open Tuesday-Thursday: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Friday: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Saturday: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.; closed Sunday and Monday. Admission is free. For more information call (801) 328-4201 or visit [www.utahmoca.org](http://www.utahmoca.org)*



Lara Jo Regan, *Ho Jo Hedge*, Lawrenceville, New Jersey, 2004 Lightjet print, 26 x 26 in.