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CU-Boulder show includes zombies, balloons

Performance touches on media addiction
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Hunter Ewen plays the sax during the performance. Cast members of "I am watch television zombie," held a rehearsal Thursday night. The performance will be February 3, 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the Atlas Black Box Theater. Cliff Grassmick / February 2, 2012 (CLIFF GRASSMICK)

If you go
What: "I Am Watch Television Zombie"
When: 7:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday
Where: Atlas, Black Box Theater
Cost: Free
Colorado.edu/atlas

Update: Due to weather, the Friday performance has been cancelled. As of Friday at 1 p.m., Ewen said he is still planning on having the Saturday show.

Zombies floating through a sea of balloons will fill the University of Colorado's Black Box Theater this weekend during graduate student Hunter Ewen's interactive performance, "I am Watch Television Zombie."

Aerial dancers gliding above the theater, which is surrounded by projection screen walls flashing media images, may seem overwhelming to some. That's the point, Ewen said.

"It's an overwhelming celebration of our shared addiction to television," Ewen said.

The idea began in October 2010 when Ewen broke the Guinness World Record for the most balloons blown up in an hour -- an experiment that began as a solution to his childhood fear of balloons.

"I thought I could cure it if I just blew up a whole bunch of them at once, and it worked," Ewen said.

One hour and 582 balloons later, "I am Watch Television Zombie," was born.

Audience members will experience interactions with the media, music, zombies and dancers, Ewen said, hopefully recognizing their own zombie-like tendencies toward television.

Nicole Predki, choreographer from Frequent Flyers Productions in Boulder, is choreographing the four aerial dancers that she said will help ground the overstimulation.

"It's kind of ironic that the aerial dancers are grounding the show," Predki said. "They bring the human element to a piece that is media-heavy and overwhelming."

Predki said the dancers will be plucked from the audience and will convey the physical and emotional feelings that she and Ewen predict the audience will experience during the show.

Ewen said despite the zombie make up and costumes, the show is not scary.

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"I have tended to incorporate some kind of evil element in my last few shows," Ewen said. "But it's not scary, I think it's more telling of the zombie-esque mentality that we have when we are overexposed to images and start blocking them out."

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