

# ARTnews

## Going for the Juggler

"The circus is this amazing art form, and it's under siege," says new-media artist **R. Luke DuBois**, whose midcareer retrospective at the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida, will feature new work celebrating the museum's circus heritage. (The Ringling houses the collection of **John Ringling**, one of the five brothers who owned and operated the famous circus.)

DuBois's career defies traditional classification—he works as a composer, computer programmer, filmmaker, record producer, and installation artist, and is a professor at New York University's Polytechnic Institute. Opening January 31 and curated by **Matthew McLendon**, "R. Luke DuBois—Now" will

encompass films, installations, works on paper, and video- and sound-based objects.

During his yearlong residency as part of the museum's "Art of Our Time" initiative, DuBois worked with the nonprofit Circus Sarasota, run by current and former circus performers, to create video "portraits" for his exhibition. He also drew inspiration from antique circus posters designed by the Strobridge Lithographing Company of Cincinnati, which he had found in the museum's collection of circus memorabilia.

By shooting with high-speed film, he was able to capture details of performances that might otherwise be missed by the naked eye. DuBois's cast of characters includes a juggler who slowly catches a pin behind her back and an acrobat whose muscles bulge as he agilely



**For his high-tech video portraits of circus performers, R. Luke DuBois found inspiration in old Ringling Bros. posters.**

supports his partner.

Circus performers are "incredibly charismatic people who work with their body and some physics," DuBois says. "There's glitz and lights and theatricality, but it's all about muscles and skill and

years of training and control." Through slow-motion video and a "little bit of temporal massaging," DuBois is able to create a work that, he says, "the audience wouldn't be able to experience live."

—**Frances Vigna**