



THE OLD COLLAGE TRY: Ray Johnson takes a playful look at a work in progress during the mid-1960s.

Drawn down a rabbit hole

By **ELIZABETH WEITZMAN**
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

By all accounts, willfully cryptic artist Ray Johnson was a riddle who remained unsolved by even his closest friends, making him an elusive subject for a documentary profile. Nonetheless, John Walter and Andrew Moore's "How to Draw a Bunny" is a fascinating exploration of the mysteries of the artist's life.

When Johnson died in 1995, an apparent suicide, he left behind piles of art and plenty of confusion. The only

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HOW TO DRAW A BUNNY.
Documentary. Directed by John
Walter. Running time: 90 minutes. At
Film Forum. Not rated: Adult themes.

thing his friends agree on is his deserved place among New York's most important postwar artists.

Unfortunately, few people outside art circles even have heard of him, which, to hear colleagues like Christo and Chuck Close tell it, is a tragedy. Walter

and Moore back up that viewpoint with hundreds of examples of Johnson's performance videos, seminal cartoons and astoundingly elaborate collages.

But, ultimately, Johnson's greatest work was his own enigmatic existence, which he approached as art itself.

"He would allow you just so far into his being, and that was it," someone says with a frustrated sigh.

That should have made the filmmakers' task so much harder; instead, they've deftly accepted the challenge Johnson laid out in every aspect of his complex life.

E-mail: elyzaw@aol.com