

'Bunny' paints odd pic

CULT artist Ray Johnson was 67 when he drowned in Sag Harbor Cove on Friday the 13th of January, 1995. Police first thought the death was an accident, but later ruled it a suicide.

The New York Times once called Johnson "New York's most famous unknown artist."

While he seemed to know everybody on the art scene, he obsessively kept to himself.

"Everybody had a story about Ray Johnson, but nobody knew the real Ray Johnson," said the cop who investigated the suicide.

John Walter and Andrew Moore's enticing and often funny documentary "How to Draw a Bunny" — a car-

toon bunny was Johnson's trademark image — tries to fill in the blanks.

They interview people ranging from artists Christo and Roy Lichtenstein, to Andy Warhol disciple Billy Name, to Johnson's mailman.

We learn that Johnson was a prankster — he once rented a helicopter and dropped 60 foot-long hot-dogs from it.

We see him hopping about on one foot while beating a cardboard box with a belt.

We learn that collage was his favorite medium, that he fashioned artwork with images of Elvis Presley, James Dean and Marilyn Monroe years before Warhol invented Pop Art.

And we are told that his small zany works most often were either stored away or sent to people via the U.S. mail.

In the most interesting story, artist Peter Schuyff recounts how he offered to buy a collage from Johnson for three-quarters of the asking price — so Johnson sent him three-quarters of the collage.

Stories like these help put a human face on the artist. Given his elusive, secretive nature, "How to Draw a Bunny" is probably the most definitive portrait of him that we are likely to get.

MOVIE REVIEW



V.A.
Musetto

**HOW TO DRAW A
BUNNY ★★★**

Running time: 90 minutes. Not rated (suicide). At Film Forum, Houston Street, west of Sixth Avenue, through Oct. 22.