

ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

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Sept. 24 – Nov. 20, 2011

Walead Beshty: *Securities and Exchanges*

—A Los Angeles-based artist explores the concept of “material transformation” in a globally-connected world

September 24, 2011. Beijing.

This September, UCCA welcomes *Securities and Exchanges*, a new solo show by Walead Beshty, a leading young Los Angeles-based artist. The exhibition marks the first time that Beshty’s works – which deal with themes of material transformation and the nature of various personal, commercial and cultural “exchanges” – have been exhibited in China. It is a uniquely interactive exhibit that invites visitors to help transform the artwork by touching, handling and even walking across some of the pieces on display.

The artworks in *Securities and Exchanges* are varied: they include “transparencies” made from unexposed film passed through x-ray machines; locally-produced “replicas” of Beshty’s past works; mirrored and glass boxes cracked or shattered while being sent via FedEx from the U.S. to China; copper sculptures that bear the fingerprints of exhibition handlers; and even a glass floor that accumulates new webs of cracks under the footsteps of each exhibition visitor.

In his exhibition foreword, UCCA Director Jérôme Sans explains that Walead Beshty “began exploring the concept of ‘material transformation’ after he inadvertently passed some undeveloped film through an airport x-ray machine. When he developed the film, he discovered striking colors and patterns that had nothing to do with his original intentions as a photographer. Since then, Beshty has been creating artwork designed to interact with as many people as possible on its journey from studio to gallery, and to accumulate evidence of these interactions every step of the way.”

Beshty feels that the things we exchange on a daily basis have a deeper significance: these items, and the traces we leave upon them, are indicative of contemporary political, economic, social and cultural systems and relationships, and the exchanges that take place within

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those frameworks. Rather than seeking to hide the process of production, consumption, exchange and transportation of his works, Beshty incorporates this process into his art. And by allowing us to interact with the pieces he creates, Beshty makes us complicit in this web of relationships and enlists us as his willing accomplices in the creation of art.

Walead Beshty was originally trained as a photographer, and it informs even his non-photographic works. At every turn, we find a photographic sensibility to light, shadow, reflections, traces and the slow accumulation of physical evidence. An active curator, critic and writer, Beshty is also focused on the theory behind the art: he establishes certain sets of parameters for his works, and observes how the works take place within the framework he has created. "The work is kind of a limit in itself," he commented in a recent interview with UCCA Director Jérôme Sans. "It's not 'anything goes.' If someone picks up one of the FedEx works in the gallery and throws it out of the window, this is not part of the work. If the roof of the museum falls in, this is not the work. It may change the work, and if either of these events happened often, I would need to adapt, but it is not part of the work as it is. It's a controlled process in the sense that there's a set of parameters [...] The thing is, in art, there is more flexibility to define these parameters, to rethink them. That's why I like it. We often forget that [...] they are simply rules, arbitrary parameters that we are free to accept or reject. They can always be modified, and I believe that they always are being modified."

"The mere act of touching, transporting, installing or even enjoying these works exacts a visible toll on them," notes UCCA Director Jérôme Sans, "but the artist does not consider this to be damage; rather, it is only by interacting with and transforming these objects that they become art. By leaving our marks on Beshty's works, wittingly or unwittingly, we become active participants in the creation of his art."

Exhibition in collaboration with Regen Projects (Los Angeles, California).

Related Events at UCCA

Artist Talk: Walead Beshty

Date: Sept. 24, 2011 / 13:30-14:30

Venue: UCCA Auditorium

Language: English with Chinese translation

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About Walead Beshty

Walead Beshty (b. 1976, London) received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Bard College in 1999 and a Master of Fine Arts from Yale University in 2002. He has held numerous solo exhibitions worldwide, most recently at the Malmo Konsthall in Sweden (2011); Regen Projects in Los Angeles (2011); Wallspace in New York (2010); Galerie Rodolphe Janssen in Brussels (2008); and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (2006). Walead Beshty currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

About UCCA

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is a non-profit, comprehensive art center founded by collectors Guy and Myriam Ullens in November 2007. UCCA presents exhibitions of established and emerging artists and develops a trusted platform to share knowledge through education and research.