

BORTOLAMI



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Eric Wesley / St. Louis

May 2016 - April 2017

1296 Camp Jackson Road, Cahokia, IL

Thursday-Saturday, 12-5 pm and by appointment

Bortolami is pleased to announce the latest phase of *Eric Wesley / St. Louis*, or "The Bell," an accumulative yearlong project by Eric Wesley in a former Taco Bell in Cahokia, IL. This project began with the renovation of the main exhibition space and the presentation of a suite of tondo "Burrito Paintings" based on the cross-section of a burrito. In the second phase of The Bell, Wesley debuted two new sculptures: facsimiles of the postmodern corner windows of the Pizza Hut across the street, as well as an installation of a snaking HVAC duct emerging from the ceiling. For the latest phase, Wesley has cultivated a corn maze in front of the building, and will present an activity involving a crow.

Many of Wesley's works in this project express a preoccupation with the dichotomy between interior and exterior. The aluminum frames of the Burrito Paintings, for example, form a "skin" around the burrito itself, and Wesley paints the exposed contents of the burrito like a biological diagram, a map of a hidden interior. The window sculptures take what is outside—namely an architectural feature of the Pizza Hut across the street—and bring it inside The Bell. The HVAC sculpture produces a heat exchange with the outside air, like a human respiratory system. The Bell, as it has developed, begins to function like an organism, drawing connections to the human body. Wesley seems to posit that ultimately the difference between what is outside and what is inside might be a construct, after all.

"The Bell also conjures a morass of conflicting American modes of cultural identification. This Mission Revival structure, built in 1980, invokes traditions of Mexican food, Spanish colonialism and white American fast food culture – in the middle of a town founded by French colonists and named for a Mississippian settlement." - Michael R. Allen, Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Washington University in St. Louis

Eric Wesley (b. 1973, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles, and received his BA from University of California Los Angeles. Wesley currently the subject of a solo exhibition at Midway Contemporary Art in Minneapolis, and is participating in the Artists for Frescobaldi 2016, the winner of which will be announced imminently. He has had solo exhibitions in galleries internationally as well as MOCA, Los Angeles and Foundation Morra Greco, Naples, Italy, and 356 Mission Road in Los Angeles. Among others, Wesley's work has been included in exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux; Fundación/Colección, Jumex, Mexico; Museo d'Arte, Benevento, Italy; the 2004 Whitney Biennial; The Prague Biennial; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; MoMA P.S.1, New York; and the Studio Museum in Harlem. He is one of the founders of Los Angeles' Mountain School of Arts.

Artist / City is an experimental programming initiative for which artists mount yearlong projects in alternative exhibition spaces across the United States. For more information on current *Artist / City* projects please visit bortolamigallery.com/artistcity.

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