

Richard Telles is pleased to present 'B. Wurtz & Co.']* an exhibition curated by Matthew Higgs, the director of White Columns, New York's oldest alternative art space.

'B. Wurtz & Co.' takes as its departure point the work of the New York-based artist B. Wurtz (b. Pasadena, 1948). The exhibition includes work by an inter-generational group of artists whose individual approaches resonate with the prevailing attitudes – aesthetic or otherwise – at play in Wurtz's art. For more than four decades B. Wurtz has deftly avoided categorization. Operating in the elastic space between sculpture and drawing, his work invokes a decidedly informal take on formalism. Eschewing the certainty of minimalism and the rational logic of conceptual art, for example, Wurtz focuses instead on more uncertain concerns. Privileging the marginal and the maligned, Wurtz re-purposes the flotsam and jetsam of everyday life into wholly new and unexpected configurations. Writing in *The New York Times* on the occasion of Wurtz's 2011 survey exhibition at Metro Pictures gallery, Roberta Smith described Wurtz's method as "... an example of an artist making much out of very little, committing acts of ingenious recycling in which existing materials and artistic thought are brought into an unusual kind of mutually enhancing alignment."

The exhibition does not necessarily concern itself with Wurtz's influence or his legacy – which, to be honest, is questionable (e.g. at least two of the participating artists, Judith Scott and the anonymous Philadelphia Wireman, would most likely have been unaware of his existence.) Instead the exhibition seeks to explore the serendipitous correspondences – both formal and psychological – at play between a group of artworks, made by an eclectic group of artists, and produced in idiosyncratic contexts and for decidedly singular ends. However in the work of all these artists traces of our material culture are transformed into something that is both familiar and strange, creating in turn a form of poetic tension described by Roberta Smith, when writing about Wurtz's art, as "... the aesthetic experience of abstract form against the easy familiarity of everyday things."

- Matthew Higgs

* In 2001 New York's Museum of Modern Art presented the exhibition "Walker Evans & Co." (which subsequently travelled to the J. Paul Getty Museum.) MoMA's exhibition took the work of Walker Evans as its departure point, drawing connections between Evans's work, that of his peers, and the work of subsequent generations of artists. I always liked the exhibition's premise and particularly it's title, which I've adapted for 'B. Wurtz & Co.'

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