

Michael Werner Gallery, London is pleased to present *James Lee Byars: The Diamond Floor*. This is the first time the work has been shown in the UK.

Originally created for Fondation Cartier pour l'art Contemporain, Paris in 1995, "*The Diamond Floor*" (1995) is a sculptural incarnation of "*Five Points Make a Man*", a conceptual motif that appears in many of the artist's drawings, sculptures and performances. For "*The Diamond Floor*", five large crystal diamonds are placed on the floor in an arrangement that forms "a slightly compressed pentagon." The shape implies a "man" as each diamond represents a head, two arms and two legs. The work is a manifestation of Byars' love for ephemeral beauty, perfect form, and the apparent contradictions between the physical and spiritual.

"*Five points make a man*" is an idea Byars became increasingly fascinated with towards the end of his life. It is rooted in the minimal human forms which are present in his early sculptural works. The concept was also particularly relevant in two important "death" performances which took place in 1994. These were, "*The Death of James Lee Byars*", performed at Galerie Marie-Puck Broodthaers in Brussels, and "*The Death of James Lee Byars - Five Points Make A Man*", performed in public in Venice. In Brussels, the artist initially lay on the floor of the gallery and, after he had risen, he placed five crystals to indicate the body's two legs, two arms and head; in the Venice work Byars substituted drops of water for the crystals.

Last summer, MoMA PS1 in New York presented "*The Diamond Floor*" in their exhibition, *James Lee Byars: 1/2 an Autobiography*, the most comprehensive survey of Byars organized in North America since the artist's death in 1997. Organized in cooperation with Museo Jumex in Mexico City, where it debuted in spring 2013, the exhibition features a selection of sculptures, fabric works, performable paper pieces, ink paintings, live performance and ephemera.

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