

During its 24th Street gallery renovation, Metro Pictures presents a selection of sculptures by B. Wurtz at 83 Pitt Street. “A master of the unassuming,” as declared by Roberta Smith in the *New York Times*, Wurtz repurposes easily discarded, commonplace objects in his masterful constructions. He balances the ordinariness of his chosen materials with a deceptively reductive presentation of cultural production, at once emphasizing the refinement of industrial design objects and recalling the monumentality of architecture. A sense of humor emerges from the directness of Wurtz’s compositions that belies the work’s underlying complexity.

A 1973 drawing inscribed with the words “sleeping, eating and keeping warm” set the parameters for the materials Wurtz has used throughout his career. From shoelaces to aluminum baking pans, each element in Wurtz’s work refers back to three fundamental necessities: food, shelter and clothing. Recycling objects related to these essential needs, Wurtz’s work articulates an elegant statement that relates to present concerns related to ecology and consumption within the micro-context of contemporary art, but also within the larger scope of politics.

Though self-identified as a sculptor, Wurtz has consistently worked across media. In the exhibition four untitled works from 1987 combine paintings and found objects. Each includes a readily available object like a sprinkler or bottle cap mounted on idiosyncratic wooden pedestals that rest on the floor. On the wall behind each of these sculptures, Wurtz includes two paintings: one a straight-on representation of the sculpture standing before it and the other a graphic detail of the object from an aerial perspective.

B. Wurtz’s work is currently the subject of a survey exhibition at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary in UK. A comprehensive catalogue is scheduled for release later this year.

Wurtz completed his undergraduate studies at UC Berkeley in 1970 and later gravitated to the conceptual art of the California Institute of Arts for his MFA. He moved to New York in the mid-1980s and has been a greatly admired participant of the city’s cultural landscape since that time.

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