

Michael Werner 4 East 77 New York New York 10075

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JAMES LEE BYARS: GOLDDUST IS MY EX-LIBRIS
SUMMER 2009

For summer, Michael Werner Gallery presents *GOLDDUST IS MY EX-LIBRIS*, an exhibition of works by James Lee Byars. The exhibition includes a major gilded work, as well as works on paper, in which gold is the medium for an aesthetic experience rooted in an ideal of luminous, inaccessible perfection.

James Lee Byars was born in Detroit in 1932. In 1958 he moved to Japan, where he would live and work over the next 10 years. During this important early period abroad, and in his frequent return trips to America, Byars developed his affinity for the notions of perfection, question and ceremony that would become the hallmarks of his life and work, fueling the artist's ongoing explorations of the transient nature of beauty. An important legacy of this time in Japan is the artist's deep appreciation for the inherent beauty of materials, including paper, fabric, stone and gold, materials the artist deployed in his wide-ranging oeuvre throughout his career.

The subject of numerous international museum exhibitions, Byars is presently the focus of two major showings in Europe. At the Palazzo Pesaro Papafava in Venice through 5 July *JAMES LEE BYARS LIVED HERE* explores the artist's connections to the city through a focused presentation of important sculptures. Earlier this year the exhibition *I'M FULL OF BYARS* originated at Kunstmuseum Bern, later traveling to Milton Keynes Gallery; the exhibition's final venue this fall is the Museum of Contemporary Art in Detroit, the artist's home town.

Recently Byars was included in *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York. Other important exhibitions include *The Rest Is Silence*, curated by Klaus Ottmann in 2006, the most comprehensive survey of the artist's work ever undertaken in the U.S.; *The Perfect Silence*, curated by Chrissie Iles for the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2005; *Life, Love and Death* at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt and the Musée d'Art modern et contemporain de Strasbourg, 2004; and major solo exhibitions at IVAM Centre del Carme, Valencia; Castello di Rivoli/Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin; The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds; Fundação de Serralves, Porto; The Arts Club of Chicago; and Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, to name only a few.

In the fall Yorkshire Sculpture Park in North England will mount a special exhibition of *The Angel*, one of the artist's most important and beautiful late works.

GOLDDUST IS MY EX-LIBRIS is on view at Michael Werner Gallery throughout the summer. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm. For more information please contact Jason Duval (jason@michaelwerner.com).

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