

Jason Rhoades

Tijuatananjierchandelier

October 24–December 7, 2019
519 West 19th Street New York

Opening reception: Thursday, October 24, 6–8 PM



Jason Rhoades, *Tijuatananjierchandelier*, 2006. Installation view, CAC Málaga, 2006. © The Estate of Jason Rhoades

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of American artist Jason Rhoades's large-scale installation *Tijuatananjierchandelier*, on view at 519 West 19th Street. First installed at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo in Málaga, Spain, in 2006, and then featured the following year at the 52nd Venice Biennale, this exhibition marks the first presentation of *Tijuatananjierchandelier* in New York. This significant work—one of several installations made during the latter part of the artist's career—exemplifies Rhoades's singular investigation of contemporary consumer culture, his career-long interest in probing both language and identity, and his ceaseless drive to push the limits of convention.

Rhoades emerged in the 1990s as one of the most formally and conceptually rigorous artists of his time. During his short but prolific career he became known for highly original, large-scale sculptural installations, which incorporate various materials inspired by Los Angeles car culture and his upbringing in rural Northern California, as well as by a mixture of historical and contemporary global and regional influences that he explored throughout his life. Until his untimely death, in 2006 at age 41, Rhoades carried out a continual assault on aesthetic conventions and the rules governing the art world, wryly subverting those conditions by integrating them into his practice. He conceived his works as part of an ongoing project, to which objects were continuously added, assembled, and reassembled in various configurations. As Rhoades's friend, fellow artist and writer Julien Bismuth, notes: "When Jason tackles a cultural topic, he does it in a deliberately dispersed and multi-perspectival way. He culls viewpoints, references, lingos, incidents, objects, [and] trends, and recomposes them to produce his complex and intricate installations. He doesn't present arguments or judgements on a situation; he shows its landscape and the plurality of voices—major and minor—that occupy it."¹ Through his unique visual aesthetic and the conceptual depth of his work, Rhoades complicated the boundaries between the sacred and the profane, the physical and the immaterial, challenging social, political, and linguistic structures and revealing the complexities and contradictions of our globalized, interconnected era.

The title of the work refers to the cities of Tijuana, Mexico, and Tangier, Morocco, two socially and culturally distinct locales separated by 6,000 miles, which Rhoades associates through their respective locations at the borders between the so-called developing world and the Euro-American West. The visually striking installation is composed of a chaotic web of dangling chandelier-like sculptures made up of neon lights and assorted wares the artist collected during his travels. Rhoades included fifty-one of these unique chandeliers in the original installation, forty-four of which are presented here. The sculptures are suspended above an array of items and souvenirs including mattresses, rugs, animal pelts, imposter handbags, sombreros, Moroccan lanterns, taxidermied animal heads, leather belts, ceramic gourds, trucker paraphernalia, bullwhips, and wooden maracas, among other found objects. Reminiscent of a bazaar or marketplace, the work addresses the rise of global tourism

¹ Julien Bismuth, in conversation with the gallery, September 2019.

David Zwirner

and consumerism—industries that have come to define the economies of these areas—while also visualizing the tension that emerges between cultural expression and identity, and cultural appropriation and stereotype. In his choice of these two locations, Rhoades also acknowledges the broader targeting of Latin Americans and Muslims in the post-9/11 political climate. Though created before the 2008 global recession, the global refugee crises, and the ensuing wave of xenophobic nationalism, *Tijuatanajierchandelier* anticipated the tensions that have recently erupted between the drive for increased free trade and globalization and the persistence of traditional notions of national sovereignty and security.

The use of language was central to Rhoades's practice, and prominent within the installation are Spanish and English euphemisms and slang words for "vagina," rendered as glowing neon signs that are at once elevatory, transgressive, misogynist, and comically absurd. His use of these terms relates to a cross-cultural compendium of synonyms for female genitalia that he primarily compiled over the last few years of his life. In *Tijuatanajierchandelier*, Rhoades's use of these taboo terms visualizes the "pornographic" excess of information in a globalized, media-saturated digital age, which he further links to the intermixing of local identity and global consumerism through the collection of objects and materials that populate the immersive installation.

Jason Rhoades (1965–2006) was born in Newcastle, California. He received his M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1993. Later that year, Rhoades joined David Zwirner—becoming part of the gallery's original roster of artists—and had his first New York solo show.

Rhoades's work has been exhibited internationally since the 1990s. His first solo presentation at a European institution was held at Kunsthalle Basel, in 1996. Other international venues that have organized solo shows include Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Germany (both 1998); Deichtorhallen Hamburg, Germany (1999); Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (MUMOK), Vienna (2002); Le Magasin - Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble, France (2005); and Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2006).

In 2013, *Jason Rhoades, Four Roads* marked the first American museum exhibition of the artist's work, organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. In 2014, the exhibition traveled internationally to the Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany, followed by the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, England in 2015. In 2017, The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, Greenwich, Connecticut, presented a solo exhibition featuring Rhoades's works from The Brant Collection as well as significant projects from the artist's career, including *My Brother/Brancusi* (1995); *The Grand Machine/THEAREOLA* (2002); and *Untitled* (from the body of work: *My Madinah: In pursuit of my ermitage...*, (2004). Work by the artist has been prominently featured in group exhibitions worldwide, including in the Whitney Biennial (1995, 1997, and 2008) and in the Venice Biennale (1997, 1999, and 2007).

Museum collections that hold works by Rhoades include the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate Gallery, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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