



James Lee Byars

Opening: April 9th, 2016

Mendes Wood DM has the pleasure of presenting the first solo show by American artist James Lee Byars in South America. The exhibition features a series of marble sculptures shown in display case/installations, as well as works created on paper. A search for the ephemerality of beauty and the minimalism of a paradoxically complex narrative transform the apparently formalist work into a silent revolution. The pieces question the time-space duality and the dialogue between physical and spiritual, presence and absence.

After studying art and philosophy, Byars moved to Kyoto in 1958, where he spent much of the following decade. This move was the beginning of a study undertaken based on his interest in Japanese theater and the rituals of Asian tribes. After these studies, the artist executed a series of works on folded paper, which were displayed in temples and a variety of museums. Throughout his career, he has also produced books, seemingly ephemeral objects and correspondences, which he used to send to his friends and acquaintances.

Obsessed with the idea of perfection, Byars produced a noteworthy work which gave form to his search for beauty and truth. Starting from what the artist called the "The first totally interrogative philosophy," he creates and proposes art in scales that range from the vastness of outside space to the microscopic level of subatomic particles, in an attempt to outline the limits of our knowledge, and also enacts the desire for something more.

The artist has worked all over the world, living between New York, Venice, San Francisco, Bern, Los Angeles and Cairo. With a blend of socio-geographical references, his works provoke the meaning of the word *contradiction* – at times monumental, at others miniscule; between universal and personal poetic narratives, extravagance and simplicity – and cause tension in the individual's visual experience. In the tensions that he provokes, the artist suggests that perfection can occur in the details of pictorial formalism, but also in moments of reflection and interpretation of the dialogue between the observer and the work.

James Lee Byars (Detroit, 1932 – Cairo, 1997) Throughout the following 1958, Byars lived and worked in Japan where he presented various performances and exhibitions, including "The Performable Square" at the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto in 1962. In 1964, he was invited to present three performances at the Carnegie Museum of Art. In the 1970s, he started spending more and more time in Europe. His main exhibitions include: "Life Love and Death" at Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt and the Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain in Strasbourg (2004); "The Perfect Silence" at the Whitney Museum of American Art (2005); "The Figure of the Question of Death" at the 55th Venice Biennale, (2013).

Mendes
Wood
DM

Rua da Consolação 3358
Jardins São Paulo
SP 01416 – 000 Brasil
+ 55 11 3081 1735
mendeswooddm.com