

LA><ART IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE
NEW WORK BY LOS ANGELES BASED ARTISTS JUSTIN BEAL
AND SAMANTHA THOMAS



Justin Beal: *Listeria*
LA><ART Gallery One
July 20 – August 24, 2013
Opening Reception: Saturday, July 20th from 6-8pm

Murmansk is a Soviet light cruiser: 17,000 tons of corroding warship, sold for scrap and then stranded off the coast of Norway. Murmansk is a Russian port city: the largest on the arctic coast, presided over by a 116-foot-tall concrete soldier. Murmansk is also a fruit dish, held aloft by six tubular legs crimped like a scissor-lift: cold, implacable, silver.

These words from a catalog essay by Joanna Fiduccia convey the varying registers of scale and substance found in Justin Beal's LA><ART exhibition, *Listeria*. Like the famous Eames' documentary the *Powers of Ten*, Beal's work moves methodically between macrocosm to microcosm. His streamlined forms include orders of magnitude that may not indicate what they seem to at first sight.

Named for a pioneer of sterile surgery, *Listeria* is a strain of bacteria that contaminates fruits like the melons seen in Justin Beal's new video, *Murmansk*. The exhibition includes a range of references to the Italian design collective Memphis, which modeled graphics from industrial patterns and medical photomicrographs. Works in the exhibition are situated between these two-dimensional surface treatments and the strategies of post-modern architecture and design that situate the body within formal structures. These constraints in Beal's words locate, "a space where material is used deviously, structure is concealed, function follows form and humor and poor taste win out over the gravitas commonly associated with modernist design."

To this end, Beal's art perceived the external world where function distorts form and vice versa. A splatter upon a mirror may reference the painterly act of making art history or it may concern discovering the body in its infinitude beneath a microscope. Organic material is never just that in the work: it is an agent of decay yet to lose shape, in tension with the strident geometry and unpolluted ideals that guide architecture and design. Added to these constraints that any sculptor must sort through is Beal's sense of humor, which uncovers something existential in the titular and the anodyne.

Justin Beal lives and works in Los Angeles. He received a BA in Architecture from Yale and an MFA from the University of Southern California. Beal also attended the Whitney Independent Studio Program. He has held recent solo exhibitions at Bortolami, New York and ACME, Los Angeles. Beal was featured in the 2008 California Biennial held at the Orange County Museum of Art. His work has been included in group exhibitions at Esther Schipper in Berlin and The Modern Institute in Glasgow, as well as Casey Kaplan Gallery, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery and Sculpture Center in New York. Beal lives and works in Los Angeles and New York.



Samantha Thomas: *Texture/Parameter*

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Samantha Thomas' works are steeped in the canon of painting while actively engaging in multiple disciplines. Her new series of work, entitled *Texture/Parameter*, marks a continued exploration with the limits of the traditional canvas. Thomas' exercises in spatial concerns are informed by landscape and our proximity to it. Her art is a means to explore the "place" of the painting, to use the artist's words. Foreground and background are conceived not by imposing perspective but by building out the materiality of the canvas, occasionally exaggerating core structural components. These assemblage works fit into the scheme of the picture plane that serve as analogies for how the physical and the psychological inform one other as distinct realms of experience. *Texture/Parameter* builds on a unique approach that seeks the architecture and sculptural form in abstraction.

Samantha Thomas received her BA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena in 2004. Thomas has exhibited at William Turner Gallery, Alexys Schwartz Projects, D-Block Projects, Here is Elsewhere Gallery, and Royal T in Los Angeles. Thomas lives and works in Los Angeles.

LA><ART Entryway

Justin Beal: *Listeria*

LA><ART Atrium
Margaret Morgan: *Sticks and Stereotypes*

ABOUT LA><ART

Founded in 2005, LA><ART is a leading independent nonprofit contemporary art space in Los Angeles, committed to the production of experimental exhibitions and public art initiatives. Responding to Los Angeles' cultural climate, LA><ART produces and presents new work for all audiences and offers the public access to the next generation of artists and curators. LA><ART supports challenging work, reflecting the diversity of the city and stimulates conversations on contemporary art in Los Angeles, fostering dynamic relationships between art, artists and their audiences. Since 2005, LA><ART has produced and commissioned over 200 exhibitions, public initiatives, and projects.

LA><ART will launch its Vision Campaign including The Occasional – a city wide exhibition and public art initiative. This platform for LA continues the organization's ongoing commitment to supporting artistic and curatorial freedom while focusing on commissioning new work in experimental contexts.

LA><ART's programs are made possible with the generous support of Michael Price, Justin Gilanyi, Kimberly Light, Michael and Joyce Ostin, Veronica Fernandez, Jonathan Berkenstadt, Mohammed Al Thani, Debbie Schneider, Laurie Ziegler, Marin Hopper, the LA><ART Board of Directors, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and The City of Los Angeles' Department of Cultural Affairs.



LA><ART is located at 2640 S. La Cienega Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90034
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LA><ART is open Tuesday through Saturday 11am – 6pm