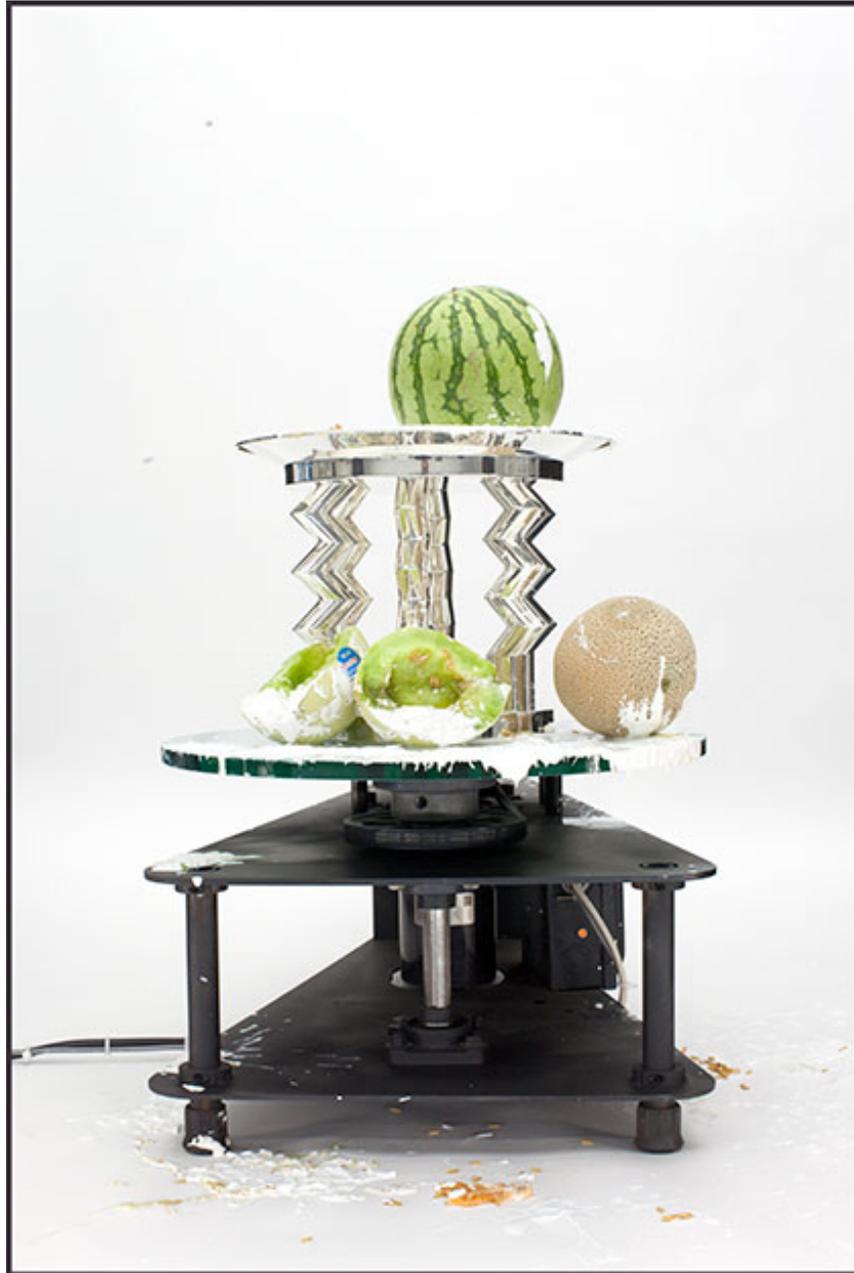


An L.A. Art Find - Luxury

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Justin Beal, Murmansk, 2013

The Los Angeles art scene—the one found outside the confines of museum walls—is increasingly being recognized for its well-known artists and up-and-comers alike. Whether one is looking at galleries in Silver Lake, Chinatown or Culver City, an abundance of artistic output in a variety of mediums is available to see. Add to that “Listeria,” an exhibit of work by local artist Justin Beal on view at the nonprofit art space Laxart through August 24.

Opened on July 20, the show consists of an architectural sculptural installation, an experimental video and a book. “Listeria” references a strain of bacteria named after English surgeon Joseph Lister, a forerunner in the evolution of sterile surgery; it occurs in a variety of fruits, like the cantaloupe seen in Beal’s video.

“Last year I made a series of cast-aluminum cucumber and cantaloupes,” he explains. “Both fruits had appeared in my work before. I suppose it is inevitable when approaching fruit as a surrogate for the body that you end up with two forms that have such an exaggerated metonymic and sexualized relationship to the human body.”

The title is also an homage to the Italian design collective Memphis Group. In the 1980s, Memphis designer Ettore Sottsass made decorative patterns and graphic prints from photomicrographs of bacteria, lending his visual language to the disorder of the natural world swarming just below the surface. Whereas the technology behind science and medicine made invisible pathogens and organisms discernable, advanced architecture and design sought to deatomize the body using the formal structures of the built environment that give social life dimension.

Beal’s artistic interpretation perceives the external world, where function distorts form and vice versa—proving that organic material, as it stands, is never just that when it comes to art. 2640 S. *La Cienega Blvd.*; 310-559-0166; laxart.org.