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Bass Museum of Art



GOLD, 2014. Exhibition view, Bass Museum of Art. James Lee Byars, *The Letter of the Angels*, n.d., *Untitled*, n.d., *The Golden Divan*, 1990. Courtesy of the Estate of the Artist and Michael Werner Gallery, New York and London. Photo: Silvia Ros.

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GOLD

August 8, 2014–January 11, 2015

Bass Museum of Art

2100 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Hours: Wednesday–Sunday noon–5pm,
Friday noon–9pm

T [+1 305 673 7530](tel:+13056737530)

www.bassmuseum.org

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Bass Museum of Art presents *GOLD*, featuring artworks by contemporary artists who physically or conceptually utilize gold in their practice. The 24 international artists in *GOLD* examine the multitude of ideas with which the material is associated, using gold to reinforce or challenge notions of transformation, beauty, spirituality, and values, both economic and moral.

Curated by José Carlos Díaz, Bass Museum of Art Curator of Exhibitions, *GOLD* is comprised of 30 works by artists Olga de Amaral, Eric Baudart, Carlos Betancourt, Chris Burden, James Lee Byars, Elmgreen and Dragset, Dario Escobar, Sylvie Fleury, Cyprien Gaillard, Patricia M. Hernandez, Jim Hodges, Glenn Kaino, Alicja Kwade, Sherrie Levine, Kris Martin, Fernando Mastrangelo, Yucef Merhi, John Miller, Martin Opper, Ebony G. Patterson, Todd Pavlisko, Robin Rhode, Cristina Lei Rodriguez and Rudolf Stingel.

Several artists overturn expectations of gold by using it to transform and elevate everyday objects, such as Sylvie Fleury's gold-plated trash can, or John Miller's assemblages of miscellaneous junk enriched through the use of gold leaf. Eric Baudart's *Concave* features peeling street posters that have been spray-painted, obliterating the manmade content they originally conveyed.

By contrast, Chris Burden's *Gold Bullets* juxtaposes gold's visual beauty with the unsettling form into which it has been cast, referencing the relationship between capital and violence as well as the artist's famous 1971 performance *Shoot*. The visual seduction of Ebony G. Patterson's heavily embellished jacquard tapestry is undercut by the scenes that she depicts—images of working-class Jamaicans who have suffered violent deaths. Robin Rhode's gilded shovel, which stands in a pile of coal dust, references South Africa's Witwatersrand Basin, the origin of half the world's excavated gold and infamous for its mining practices.

Some artists explore the ritualistic use of gold to imbue objects with spiritual and eternal significance. James Lee Byars utilizes gold in pursuit of his idea of sacred beauty and perfection by including a tiny golden sphere in his *Self-Portrait* and using metallic fabric in *The Golden Divan*.

Several works in the exhibition reference Pre-Columbian art and allude to the European conquest of the Americas. Carlos Betancourt photographs objects belonging to friends and family which he re-contextualizes in symmetrical golden totems, reflecting his trans-Caribbean identity and Taíno culture. Olga de Amaral's glistening tapestry was made using traditional weaving methods, emblematic of Pre-Columbian artifacts. Fernando Mastrangelo's *Medallion* references Pre-Columbian deity offerings. In this case, gifts like precious stones are replaced with gold dragées and crystallized sugar, modern-day exports through which the artist draws attention to the power of the commodities trade.

Among the highlights of the exhibition is a gold painting by Rudolf Stingel in which anonymous inscriptions are transformed alchemically into an artwork, expanding the vocabulary of painting and demystifying both the idea and process of making art. Elmgreen and Dragset's *Temptation*, a gilded sculpture of an arm emerging from the wall holding a bulging bag of coins, explores the duality of gold by depicting either an act of generosity or an enticement to theft.

GOLD is generously supported by One/Sotheby's International Realty.

Under the leadership of Executive Director Silvia Karmen Cubiñá, the Bass Museum of Art offers a dynamic year-round schedule of contemporary exhibitions. Artists' projects, lectures, concerts and free family days complement the works on view. The museum's Lindemann Family Creativity Center is the home of IDEA@thebass program of art classes and workshops. Additionally, as part of the education department, the museum showcases select works from the permanent collection in the "Art History Lab." Founded in 1963 in the original Miami Beach Library designed by Russell Pancoast, the museum will undergo an internal expansion in 2015 designed by architects Arata Isozaki and David Gauld.

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311 East Broadway
New York, NY 10002, USA

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jose carlos diaz
curator of exhibitions
bass museum of art
2100 collins avenue
miami beach, fl 33139
t 305 673 7530 x1006
jdiaz@bassmuseum.org
www.bassmuseum.org

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