

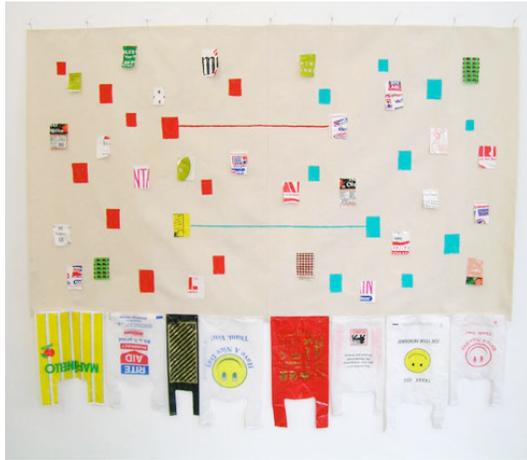
# METRO PICTURES

## B. Wurtz Works 1970-2011

Curated by Matthew Higgs

June 22 – August 5, 2011

Opening reception: June 22, 6–8 PM



Top: B. Wurtz, *Untitled*, 2009, plastic bags, acrylic paint, string, canvas, 75 x 90 x 1 in. Bottom: B. Wurtz, *Three Important Things*, 1973, ink on paper, 29 ½ x 23 ¾ in.

Matthew Higgs, a long-standing fan and supporter of B. Wurtz, is director and chief curator of White Columns, in New York. He was curator at the CCA Wattis Institute in San Francisco and the ICA in London and has organized more than 100 exhibitions, including the Greek Pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale and the 2000 British Art Show. He was a juror for the 2006 Turner Prize. His writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *Art Monthly*, and *Afterall*.

Metro Pictures is pleased to present a special summer exhibition: the first New York survey of the work of B. Wurtz. Spanning some 40 years, the show is a collaboration between White Columns director Matthew Higgs, the exhibition's curator; B. Wurtz; Metro Pictures; and Feature Inc., the artist's longtime gallery.

Born in Pasadena, California, in 1948, Wurtz graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1970. That same year, he made *Handbag*, which is the earliest work in the exhibition. A humble wall-hung sculpture that resembles its title, *Handbag* is made from a few sheets of plastic and a thin metal wire. This early piece is a precursor to later constructions that continuously and optimistically flouted successive waves of the aesthetic orthodoxies of his peers.

In 1973, the artist penned *Three Important Things*, a drawing that served as a foundational statement for his work. Objects in Wurtz's works have steadfastly derived from its three listed concerns ("sleeping, eating, keeping warm), resulting in an ever-inventive profusion of sculptural objects and wall hangings that have channeled the possibilities of lowly everyday objects. Wurtz has fulfilled the potential of food wrappers, plastic bags, shoelaces, locks, yogurt caps, and mop handles, among other common products.

Declared "a master of the unassuming, if not completely disguised, artwork" by critic Roberta Smith, Wurtz has lived and worked in New York since the mid-1980s. He is a graduate of the California Institute of Arts and UC Berkeley. In 2000, the University of Illinois at Chicago's Gallery 400 presented a retrospective of his work titled *70 + 30 = 2000*. His work has been in exhibitions at MoMA P.S.1, MCA Chicago, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, RISD Museum of Art, the Corcoran Gallery, and Castillo/Corrales, Paris. A digital catalogue is available on Metro Pictures' website.