



MEDIA CONTACT
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**ALWAYS FRESH
ALWAYS FREE**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is pleased to present *Perspectives 175: Marc Swanson: The Second Story*.

Perspectives 175:
Marc Swanson: The Second Story
July 1 – October 9, 2011

Opening Reception and Gallery
Walk-Through

Thursday, June 30

6:30PM: Gallery walk-through with the artist

7-9PM: Opening Reception

Performance: *Two Alike**

Thursday, September 15, 7:30PM,

Friday, September 16, 7:30PM, or

Saturday, September 17, 7:30PM

*Co-presented with *DiverseWorks ArtsSpace* and will take place at *DiverseWorks, 1117 E. Freeway, Houston*

HOUSTON, TX (June 15, 2011)—From his earliest works, Brooklyn-based artist Marc Swanson has made his topic the construction of self as an incomplete and always fragmentary project. Everything—including heavy metal, the Yeti, and hunting trophies—have become part of his artistic language. *Perspectives 175: Marc Swanson: The Second Story* features new sculptures by the artist that consider the worldview of the generations that have grown up since AIDS placed a final marker on the early era of gay liberation, severing the ties to that culture's rich history. It's been left to younger artists like Swanson to decipher and reinterpret the stories and images of that elder generation. The Second Story was a gay bar in San Francisco, long gone when the artist lived there but—in its punning name—haunting. The name might just mean that it was located on the second floor of a building, but it also suggests the layers of narrative that overlap in each patron's life—the true, the false, and the mythic.

Working with found objects and photographs cobbled together into unlikely assemblage sculptures that often take tableaux form, whether in boxes or small stage-set like constructions, Swanson is always art-historically



Marc Swanson, *Untitled (Boxer Box)*, 2010. Wood, chain, digital c-print, polyurethane. 24 x 36 x 8 1/2 inches. Courtesy the artist

aware. His newest works, made specifically for this Houston installation, were inspired by a visit to the Menil's Cy Twombly pavilion. Swanson reconsiders the aspirations, achievements, and formal language of Twombly's sculptures while replacing Twombly's Greek Gods with Hollywood, Decadent Literature, and pop culture icons, celebrating the fact that they are quintessentially inauthentic and death obsessed. Yet, in Swanson's hands, come exploded shards of beauty out of their artifice and negativity.

Swanson conjures as his artistic doppelganger the character Jean Des Esseintes from Joris-Karl Huysmans' 1884 novel *Against Nature*, in which the wealthy scion of a failing family retreats into an interior world of ever more exquisite divertissement. The character realizes that he has made his chambers too dark, so he has his pet tortoise covered in jewels to catch and radiate more light, which works briefly until the weight costs the animal its life. Swanson's show at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston begins with a similar animal's shell that the artist has salvaged as another trophy or archetype of a strongly manifested position of crippling refinement as a defense against a harsh world.

Yet Swanson demands much from viewers as many of his sculptures have a great deal of blankness left. The spaces of projection are vast, and the three-dimensional pieces reveal many different aspects, a whole made up of

CAMH



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fragments that are meant to never fully cohere. In works like *Untitled (Gold Box)* (2011), the golden shards might be what's left the morning after a disco party, a psychological portrait, or both, and no single reading is ever fully fixed.

Perspectives 175: Marc Swanson: The Second Story is curated by Bill Arning, Director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

All events are free and open to the public, and take place at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston unless otherwise noted. For complete listings and current information, please check www.camh.org.

Artists/Scholars Talk: Bill Arning

Thursday, July 21, 6:30PM

Learn more about *Perspectives 175: Marc Swanson: The Second Story*. Join us for a gallery walk-through with Bill Arning, CAMH's Director and curator of the exhibition.

Film Screening: Making the Boys*

Saturday, July 30, 3-4:30PM

*Special location: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Brown Auditorium, Brown Auditorium, 1001 Bissonnet

The remarkable story of how *Boys in the Band* became the first play depicting the lives of gay men, and its historical impact upon the world of theatre. Directed by Crayton Robey, 2009, color, 90 min. Screened in conjunction with CAMH's exhibition *Perspectives 175: Marc Swanson: The Second Story*.

General admission is \$10; tickets can be purchased online or at the box office. Visit www.mfah.org. Cosponsored by QFest, MFAH Films, The Alley Theatre, and CAMH.

Performance: Two Alike*

Thursday, September 15, 7:30PM,

Friday, September 16, 7:30PM, or

Saturday, September 17, 7:30PM

*Special location: DiverseWorks ArtSpace, 1117 E. Freeway, Houston

Join us for the premiere of *Two Alike* by choreographer and performer Jack Ferver. Marking the first co-production between the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and DiverseWorks ArtSpace, Ferver pairs up with visual artist Marc Swanson to create a meditative and visceral performance tracking the journey from rural upbringing to a furious adulthood in an urban landscape. Existing in an alter-space, housing childhood fantasies and turbid adult

obsession, Ferver acts as the emotive flesh and voice inside of Swanson's eerie and raw set/sculpture.

For more information and tickets (available in August), visit www.diverseworks.org.

Cosponsored by DiverseWorks Artspace and CAMH.

PUBLICATION

Perspectives 175: Marc Swanson: The Second Story is accompanied by a catalogue, featuring an essay by Bill Arning, Director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and curator of the exhibition, as well as color reproductions of exhibited work.

Perspectives catalogues are made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

The *Perspectives* Series is made possible by major grants from Faye Sarofim; The Studio, the young professionals group of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; and by donors to the Museum's *Perspectives* Fund: Bright Star Productions Inc., Heidi and David Gerger, Karol Kreymer and Robert J. Card, M.D., Kerry Inman and Denby Auble, Lauren Rottet, Leslie and Shannon Sasser in Honor of Lynn Herbert, William F. Stern, and 20K Group, LLC.

EDUCATION SUPPORT

The Museum receives support for its education programs from: Anonymous, Baker Hughes Foundation, Ruth Dreessen and Thomas Van Laan, Louise D. Jamail, John P. McGovern Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. I.H. Kempner III, Kinder Morgan Foundation, Leticia Loya, Andrew R. McFarland, M.D. Anderson Foundation, Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment, Mrs. Louisa Stude Sarofim, and 20K Group, LLC.

Teen Council is supported by Mrs. Louisa Stude Sarofim with additional support from Baker Hughes Foundation.

GENERAL SUPPORT

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United is the official airline of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

CAMH MISSION

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is an idea and a place shaped by the present moment. The Museum exemplifies the dynamic relationship between contemporary art and contemporary society through its exhibitions, public and educational programs, and publications. The CAMH provides the physical and intellectual framework essential to the presentation, interpretation, and advancement of contemporary art; it is a vibrant forum for artists and all audiences, and for critical, scholarly, and public discourse.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Hours are Wednesday 11AM-7PM, Thursday 11AM-9PM, Friday 11AM-7PM, Saturday and Sunday 11AM-6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit www.camh.org or call 713 284 8250.