

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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PROJECTS: BILL BECKLEY

Bill Beckley's "narrative art works, combining visual and verbal images, are on view in the first-floor galleries of The Museum of Modern Art from October 18 through November 28. Directed by Kynaston McShine, Curator of Painting and Sculpture, PROJECTS: BILL BECKLEY is the latest in the Museum's continuing series of exhibitions exploring new directions in contemporary art.

Beckley juxtaposes mural-scale color photographs of familiar images and objects with panels of text that tell seemingly commonplace stories. By monumentalizing the banal, these photographs, which Beckley laboriously processes himself, transform the ordinary into the extra-ordinary. In a similar fashion, Beckley's texts, while appearing to tell easily comprehensible tales, soon reveal themselves as full of puns, double-entendres and unspoken "other" meanings. Thus, both images and text undercut the notion of stable visual or linguistic reference.

"The elements in Bill Beckley's compositions connote the fragments of a realistic and inspired kaleidoscope," notes Mr. McShine. "He has introduced the narrative as an extension of conceptual art. The stories are puzzles, mysterious and evasive. The visual images seem complementary, and yet often are incongruous. His visual and verbal imagery displays a carefully restrained wit. The total impact is fresh and sensuous, the structure coherent and surprisingly logical."

Beckley was born in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, in 1946. After studying at Kutztown State College and doing graduate work at Temple University in Pennsylvania, he began an active career as an artist. He has had several one-man exhibitions in the United States and Europe and has also been included in many group exhibitions, among them the United States representation at the 1976 Venice Biennale.

This exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. The Museum's exhibition program is partially funded through the New York State Council on the Arts.

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For further information, please contact Luisa Kreisberg, Director (212) 956-2648 or Bruce Wolmer (212) 956-7298, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019.
