Nick Cave

Biography
Born 1959, Missouri
Lives and works in Chicago

Selected Solo Exhibitions
2014 Nick Cave, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
2013 Freepoint 006: Nick Cave, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
Nick Cave: The World’s My Skin, Trapholt Museum, Denmark
Nick Cave: Sixpenny, Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado
2012 Soundtracks, University of Texas Art Gallery, Denton, Texas
Nick Cave: Austin Museum Collection, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, Florida
Fantastic 2012, Lille 3000, Tri Postal, Lille, France
Nick Cave, Ever-After, Jack Shainman Gallery in collaboration with Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY
Nick Cave, For Now, Mary Boone Gallery in collaboration with Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, NY
2010 Nick Cave, Studio La Citta, Verona, Italy
Lost-and-Found: Nick Cave, Norman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri
2009 Nick Cave: Meet Me at the Center of the Earth, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, California
Travelled to the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, Arizona, Fowler Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, California; Norton Museum, West Palm Beach, Florida; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington; Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke, Virginia; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio; Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho

Selected Group Exhibitions
2014 The First International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia
2013 Block in the Abstract, Part 1: Epistrophy, Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston, Houston, Texas
Galeries Dane, Galerie Lelong, New York, NY
2012 Innovators and Legends: Generations in Textiles and Fibers, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

Collections
Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts
Art in Embassies Program, United States Department of State
Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, New York
Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas
Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan
High Museum, Atlanta, Georgia
Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Selected Group Exhibitions
Now What?, Norton Museum, Miami, Florida
Dissolution, Göteborgs Konsthall, Sweden
Pattern, Costumes, and Ornament in African and African-American Art, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama
Hand = Made: The Performative Impulse in Art and Craft, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas
Pattern JD, Arton Art Museum, Traveled to the Kemper Museum, Kansas City, Missouri

2009 Not Just Another Pretty Face, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, Illinois
30 Americans: Rubell Family Collection, Miami, Florida
Travelled to North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, North Carolina; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia; Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, Tennessee
Undercover: Performing and Transforming Black Female Identities, Spelman College Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia
The Art of Fashion: Installing Alibis, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Exhibition
Nick Cave: Meet Me at the Center of the Earth, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, California
Travelled to the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, Arizona, Fowler Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, California; Norton Museum, West Palm Beach, Florida; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington; Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke, Virginia; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio; Boise Art Museum, Boise, Idaho

Pictoplasma: Post-Digital Monsters, La Galerie Lyrique, Paris, France
Are You a Hybrid, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY
Panorama’s Box, Joseph Comel Ulitco the MCA Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois

06/20/2014 – 10/19/2014

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Drive-by
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Drive-By

SINGLE-CHANNEL 5: DANCE explores various ways in which visual artists incorporate a second art form, dance, into their video works. Although sculptors, painters, draughtsmen, and photographers have long found inspiration in dancers, video art is uniquely positioned to present the movement and sound so essential to dancing along with the purely visual. The first artist presented in this series, Nick Cave, occupies a unique place at the forefront of contemporary art, combining dance, costume design, public art, sound, sculpture, and in this case, video into a hybrid art form that requires no definitive name.

The artist’s multidisciplinary background helped form his distinct approach to art making; he studied textiles in the fiber department of the Kansas City Art Institute, dance though an Alvin Ailey program, and received his graduate degree at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, renowned for its innovative approach to arts and design. As well as being an internationally-exhibited artist, Cave now directs the fashion graduate program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His art expresses the influence of these various genres, and in turn contributes to the evolving legacy of each.

Cave is best known for his Soundsuits, which he began making in the 1990s. Made from fabric, feathers, hair, natural materials, found objects, and traditional costume decorations such as sequins, buttons, and beads, these suits are designed to be worn and activated by dancers (often the artist himself). Colorful, exuberant, and sometimes ungainly, the identity of the human inside the work is completely obscured. Gender, race, and even body type become mostly inscrutable, rendering the dancer a moving work of art. Although the body’s movements can be limited or impeded by the elaborate shape and decoration of the suits, new forms of movement—swirling raffia, ruffling fur, and swinging appendages—offer new modes of expressive motion. When being danced, Cave’s Soundsuits can recall the elaborate spectacle and ritual of Brazil’s Carnival or African ceremonial dance costumes. When placed on a mannequin and exhibited in a gallery, they transform into contemporary sculpture, where their stillness allows the viewer to appreciate the form, color, and detail of their construction.

Drive-By not only captures several Soundsuits in motion, but also manipulates time and sound to enhance that movement. In some scenes, the dancers move in real time to electronic music with a recognizable beat and lyrics, and despite the elaborate works of art they wear, their feet, arms, and specific movements are quite discernable. Other sequences speed time up, turning the forms into blurs of color, or slow it down, showing the dramatic swing and sweep of both the long fibers used in several of the suits and the dancers’ gestures. We also see Cave push his performers into the realm of abstraction, using digital technology to multiply them across the screen, creating suits that almost completely obscure the human form, and assembling an experimental soundscape. Due to the materials with which they are constructed, Cave’s suits sometimes make sounds of their own while in motion. Drive-By features enhanced versions of these noises, as well as the springing sound of a pogo stick, and hints from the more traditional music included in the video. The result is an accompaniment to the visuals that, while rhythmic, defies traditional definitions of music.

Cave’s video is often joyful to watch, and a feast for the eyes and ears with its varied color and sounds. By placing the performers against a white, featureless background, any sense of specific time and space are lost. These dancers could be creatures of fantasy or expressions of pure feeling. The title “Drive-by,” however, has a dark connotation that references inner-city violence. While Cave’s work rarely seems overtly political, his first Soundsuit was created in response to the Rodney King beating in 1992. Made of twigs, it resembled a suit of armor, protecting the artist from the world outside. In the many Soundsuits that followed, and in performances and video works like Drive-by, Cave has transformed that armor into not only a means of protection but a new, abstract way of presenting the human form. Free from everyday definitions of identity, Cave’s humans look, sound, move, and dance differently than any who have come before.

Laura Burghalter | Associate Curator