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Jarrold Beck. *Between Chaos and Order*.

(IMAGE) Photo: Jarrod Beck)

(CAPTION) Jarrod Beck. *Visitor Center*, 2009. Courtesy of the artist

Jarrold Beck (Albany, New York, 1977) creates spaces and emotions, situations, encounters and exchanges. It seems rather obvious to connect his training as an architect with the spatial level of his works, but the universes he creates mainly through installations have much more than a merely architectural dimension to them.

Based on his enquiry into architects' use of memory as a tool to create spaces, Beck developed a growing interest in the technique of engraving. The possibility of documenting an infinite amount of layers became an essential element that was later recreated in a different form through larger-scale installations. As a technique, engraving allows the artist to physically carve a set of images on a plate and then cover it with an overflowing river of ink in order to achieve a clean, new print that emerges from a complex web of engraved and superimposed lines. Layers, layers and more layers... from a complex weave a new work emerges that is loaded with interwoven, confused and at times chaotic meanings. Beck asserts his desire to juxtapose the intimacy of engraving with architectural space, and he achieves this mainly through a particular material: plaster, which he uses along with other found and manufactured material, dyed fabrics, solid or recycled structures. The techniques of engraving applied to this particular material mean that it is converted into the perfect medium for Beck's purpose: it obtains the weight and density he is looking for, as well as receiving information as if it were a substratum or mesh laden with the historical implications of the material communicated via its former uses. It is the perfect material to capture and document memory, to draw maps, to make grooves in space and to define landscapes: it is without a doubt a repository of information over time, which bears the traces of different experiences. In Beck's installations it is a material whose weight obtains a dual meaning, combining fragility and the special quality of its changing nature: from dust to liquid and finally to solid, to then turn back into dust again as it decays.

In this sense, the process becomes extremely important for Beck. What is usually reserved for the back room, what is hidden in the wings, emerges into the foreground here before the eyes of anyone who is interested and who intends to involve herself with the work through her own personal experience. Beck's installations thus become collective adventures that draw in interested visitors, friends or passersby, as in the case of his *Visitor Center* (2009), recently installed in Lower Manhattan, in the traditionally tourist and commercial area of South Street Seaport. In *Visitor Center*, Beck worked for several days to create a space that even attained a certain sense of monumentality. But not for long... it gradually began to fall apart... but always with witnesses, never in solitude, always with his presence, always as an evolution and not a destruction.

The apparent chaos and disorder that characterizes his installations also contains notions of extreme order. During the creative process, the materials, forms, structures and ideas explode in an uncontrolled eruption, but they return to order in the project's ordered appearance. It is no surprise to find in his installations, behind the disorder of the process, the moment of meticulous archeology that gathers up the found fragments and places them, clean and dust-free, carefully into a glass case, almost with the delicacy with which a biologist would place colored butterflies in orderly, straight lines.

His work's interest resides in the duality between chaos and order, and also in the importance of process, above and beyond the final product in itself. The spectator or

visitor's interaction becomes crucial for the work to be fully realized, but also to sate the exchange of emotions and life experiences that Beck shares with generosity and interest.

Escaping from the confined gallery space, the installations that he creates in museums and public spaces enter into the category of landscape - another essential part of his work. His journeys to the American West Coast have made their mark, leading to the notable presence of the meaning of life in the desert, posited as a remote, malleable place, full of new horizons and possibilities. Through this study of purely urban elements and open, semi-abandoned landscapes that enable their development, Beck also criticizes the fall-out of the excessive development of overpopulated areas and the unsustainable structures, of power and environment, that they are based on.

The beauty of disorder reveals naked structures that are easy to get into, once you decide to immerse yourself in them. From a distance, Beck's structures can seem somewhat apocalyptic, untouchable and complicated, but this seeming lack of control only invites us to get closer and look at them, allowing us to participate in their universe. They offer us a multitude of details and elements that are ultimately comforting.

Difficult to document via traditional mediums, his works become maps that journey through the territories of life. With Beck's ephemeral structures, we can aspire to understand our relationship with our fragile surroundings, whilst also arriving at that comprehension from the narrative for which Beck, as a builder of spaces and a storyteller, sets the scene.

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(IMAGE) Photo: Jarrod Beck)

(IMAGE) Jarrod Beck, *Pocket Map (West Coast Triangulation)*, 2008. Courtesy of the artist.

(IMAGE) Photo: Jarrod Beck)

(IMAGE) Jarrod Beck, *Orpheus Rebuilds*, 2004. Courtesy of the artist.