

**For Immediate Release**



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**Exhibition:** *Curt LeMieux: Their Ways*

**Curator:** Sinéad Finnerty-Pyne

**Exhibition Dates:** October 1, 2011-January 22, 2012

**Opening Reception:** Saturday, October 8, 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Armory Center for the Arts, 145 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena, CA 91103

Armory Center for the Arts is pleased to present *Their Ways*, an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist Curt LeMieux located in the Armory's Mezzanine Gallery. Organized by curator Sinéad Finnerty-Pyne, the exhibition will be on display from October 1 to January 22. A free public reception will take place on Saturday, October 8, from 7-9 p.m.

Curt LeMieux is a keen observer of nature. Meditating in the less-than-peaceful urban environment of his neighborhood – characterized in part by the sights, sounds, and smells of traffic from the adjacent Interstate 5 Freeway – LeMieux finds beauty in the colors, patterns, rhythms, sounds, and movements of riparian wildlife, specifically the birds that live nearby on the banks of the Los Angeles River. About his visceral desire to engage the communicative process, to understand “their ways” while continuing to remain in the role of a distant observer, LeMieux says, “I receive an occasional glimpse, at times I formulate ideas, I become excited, but in the end I stand apart from the other creatures, a lone human inhabiting a world filled with life and activity.”

Ever mindful of the presence of birds, the idea for a series of work on the subject arose while thumbing through the richly illustrated pages of a 1976 book entitled *Birds: Their Life, Their Ways, Their World*. The variety of species in this reference volume sparked reflections on the infamous British Petroleum oil spill of summer 2010 and the broader ecological degradation that has unfolded over the course of the artist's lifetime. LeMieux began to consider the ways birds have been forced to adapt to the influence of human industry and development. In his mixed media collages, derived from the encyclopedia illustrations, LeMieux alludes playfully to the idea of birds in flight. The found images

are built up, turned upside down, and even torn in places, reflecting the movement of birds in flight as well as the disruption of their natural habitats.

In his mixed media sculptures LeMieux distills the language of a given animal into a single sculptural form. LeMieux's study of Minimalism inspires him to illustrate his concept with material economy. The Bearded Bell Bird, for example, is represented through a simple line drawing on the wall using black duct tape, adorned with fabric and layers of rubber hose that simulate the animal's inflatable tendril-like beard. The ambiguous, non-representational characteristics of this work further communicate the detachment of the two cultures, human and animal. This contrast strikes a balance for LeMieux, offering him and the viewer a sense of lightness and a place for meditation.

Curt LeMieux received an M.F.A. in Drawing and Installation in 2001 from Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA. He also holds a B.F.A. in Painting and an M.A. in Sculpture from the University of Wisconsin at Superior. His work has been shown nationally and internationally and appears in numerous private collections. Exhibition venues and events include: The Museum of Contemporary Art in Minsk, Belarus; The Sixth Festival of International Images in Manizales, Colombia; Luna International, Berlin, Germany; The Berkeley Video and Film Festival, Berkeley, CA.; The Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA.; Track 16 Gallery, Santa Monica, CA.; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA.; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA.; and Sea and Space Explorations, Los Angeles, CA.

LeMieux's study of ornithological language systems represents one strain of a long history of semantic explorations. Concurrent with *Their Ways*, the Armory will present the exhibition *Speaking in Tongues: The Art of Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken*, which brings two seminal yet under-studied Los Angeles artists into close conversation with one another for the first time. Focusing on language and the creation of new visual codes, their works are explored within the unique cultural milieu of 1960s and 1970s Southern California as it fueled and amplified each artist's highly original creative approach to making images. Organized by the curatorial team of Claudia Bohn-Spector and Sam Mellon, with supporting research by Carolyn Peter, this exhibition brings attention to the little-known friendship between the Berman and Heinecken and how these two artists bridged modernist and emerging post-modernist trends by ushering in the use of photography as a key element of contemporary avant-garde art. *Speaking in Tongues: The Art of Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken* is a part of Pacific Standard Time: Art in LA 1945-1980. This unprecedented collaboration, initiated by the Getty, brings together more than sixty cultural institutions from across Southern California for six months beginning October 2011 to tell the story of the birth of the L.A. art scene.

Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

### **About the Armory**

The Armory Center for the Arts, in Pasadena, California, builds on the power of art to transform lives and communities through presenting, creating, teaching, and discussing contemporary visual art. The organization's department of exhibitions mounts over 25 visual arts exhibitions each year at its main facility and in locations throughout the City of Pasadena. In addition, the Armory offers studio art classes and a variety of educational outreach programs to more than fifty schools and community sites. The Armory believes that an understanding and appreciation of the arts is essential for a well-rounded human experience and a civil community.

*Gallery hours at Armory Center for the Arts are Tuesday – Sunday, noon-5 p.m. \$5 suggested donation. Armory members, students, and seniors are free. The Armory is easily accessible from the Gold Line Memorial Park Station in Pasadena. For information about Armory exhibitions and events, the public may call 626.792.5101 x122. or visit the Armory website at [www.armoryarts.org](http://www.armoryarts.org).*