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DUST, FEATURING RECENT AND NEW WORKS BY ROBERT BECK, ON VIEW AT WEXNER CENTER THIS SUMMER EXHIBITION DELVES INTO THE COMPLEXITY OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN IDENTITY

*May 10, 2007—Columbus, OH—**dust***, an exhibition featuring a compelling collection of new and recent works in a variety of media by **Robert Beck**, is on view at the **Wexner Center May 12–August 12, 2007**.

Steeped in contemporary American culture and grounded in autobiography, Robert Beck's drawings, photographs, sculptures, videos, and installations draw from personal experience and popular media and culture to form complex investigations of violence, sexuality, psychology, and masculinity. *dust* is organized and curated by Wexner Center Media Arts Director Bill Horrigan.

Horrigan says: "Beck's artistic range—from photography to drawings to sculpture to video—coupled with his interest in contemporary American identity generate questions that challenge perception and make him one of the most provocative artists of his generation."

He is interested in the interactions of fact and fiction, memory and imagination, family relationships and ritual. Beck's work reveals that how we become ourselves is an intricate mixture of DNA, sibling rivalries, classmates, television shows, memories, institutions, and even traumatic events.

Robert Beck will speak about his recent work and *dust* as part of an Artist's Talk on **Wednesday, May 23 at 4:30 pm** in the Wexner Center's Film/video Theater. The talk will be interpreted in American Sign Language.

A **catalogue** will accompany the exhibition and feature a foreword by Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin, and texts by Horrigan, former Wexner Center Chief Curator Helen Molesworth, and esteemed art historian Robert Hobbs.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Beck connects the title, ***dust***, with a phrase from Genesis 3:19, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Also chosen for the mere fact that "it accumulates," *dust* unravels its contents in the form of chalk, latent fingerprint powder, sifted memories, covered private parts, and grainy photographs. The gallery walls leading up to the exhibition will be covered in blackboard paint, actively engaging viewers with a tray of chalk and erasers they can use to write and erase freely.

Inside the galleries, the looming presence of chalk dust on the walls where Beck had previously inscribed various newspaper articles, obituaries, and

advertisements from June 20, 1965—and then erased them—leave the viewer with a vacillating perspective between past and present.

Specifically created for this exhibition are haunting psychoanalytical drawings of appropriated personality assessment tests drawn by children, redrawn and layered with other drawings by Beck, and then treated with the fingerprinting powder used to dust crime scenes. *Apart from the Whole (Communion)* includes a series of photographs of gestures related to a Catholic child's First Holy Communion arranged in what Beck refers to as a "dime store frame." Objects include *Private Zone (White)*, a child's shower curtain superimposed with images from the instructional manual *Private Zone*, a read-together book created for parents to help children cope with sexual assault. More of a displaced memory, *Glove Skinning* is an appropriated illustration of how to skin a rabbit with your bare hands from *The Modern Man's Guide to Life*, a how-to guide that includes tips on such things as grooming, cooking, and car repair given to Beck by his parents when he turned 33.

Closing the exhibition are five photographs of two-dimensional images associated with rooms occupied by various Beck family members.

ROBERT BECK

Born in Baltimore, Maryland and currently based in New York City, Robert Beck graduated from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts with a B.A. in filmmaking and also studied art making at The Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. Both his videotapes and artworks have been exhibited in the US and Europe, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, and Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, Berlin, Germany. In 1999, Beck received the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award and in 1995, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship. In 2006, a survey of his work was shown at Opalka Gallery, The Sage Colleges, Albany, New York, and he exhibited with Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. He is represented by CRG Gallery, New York, and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

This exhibition is organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts.

VISITOR INFORMATION

THE EXHIBITION: Robert Beck: *dust* on view at the Wexner Center features new and recent works that investigate contemporary American culture.

DATES: May 12–August 12, 2007. Also on view: *State Fare: Three Ohio Artists*, Chris Marker: *Staring Back*, and Zoe Leonard: *Analogue*.

LOCATION: Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 North High Street at 15th Avenue at The Ohio State University. Parking in Ohio Union Garage just south of the Center.

GALLERY HOURS: Tuesday–Wednesday and Sunday 11 am–6 pm; Thursday–Saturday 11 am–8 pm. The galleries are closed on Monday.

ADMISSION: Free.

PUBLIC INFORMATION: wexarts.org or 614 292-3535

Media contact for images, interviews, or more information:

Erik Pepple, epepple@wexarts.org or 614 688-3261