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SOCIETY AND STYLE

London Artist Conrad Shawcross Makes His Mark in New York

by *Rebecca Guinness*

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Conrad Shawcross. *From PatrickMcMullan.com.*

One of the rising stars of the London art scene, Conrad Shawcross, has been living and working in New York City for the last few months. His first show in the area is a residency show at Location One, in SoHo, which is up until September. He's debuting an exhibition at Fireplace Project, in East Hampton, tomorrow.

VF Daily: Tell me about the work you're showing in East Hampton this weekend.

Conrad Shawcross: It's a collection of older and newer work. There are some decahedron pieces that are like atomic explosions. They stem from my interest in the Big Bang and the idea of everything emerging from one point. It's actually my second solo show in the New York area, and I have another at Cabinet, in Brooklyn, next week, which is a video installation of a journey I took on a handmade rowing boat down the Gowanus Canal. I collaborated for that with Poppy de Villeneuve, who took the documentary pictures.

Your parents, William Shawcross and Marina Warner, are writers. Did their work influence you in any way?

I was always quite dyslexic and never a voracious reader, so I was never going to follow in their footsteps, but they definitely encouraged my creativity.

A lot of your work centers around philosophical and mathematical ideas. Were you ever tempted to follow that path of study?

I really liked maths and physics, but on a more philosophical level. I loved the ideas, the images it conjured and the questions it raised.

How has living in New York City influenced your work?

Because I don't have a place here where I can make pieces, I work in a very different way being away from the production side. Also, I am interested in Minimalism. The Walter de la Maria room around the corner from my studio here is a beautiful permanent installation.

How do you like living in New York City as opposed to London?

I love the immediacy of New York. It's addictive because it's so easy to get around and meet people. In London, I seem to spend a couple of hours every day commuting. What I do miss, though, is my kitchen and cooking and going to people's houses to eat—spending time at home, rather than an apartment just being a place to sleep.

Tell me about your trapeze skills.

I've always wanted to be a trapeze artist, and it's my secret reason for being here. I did quite a lot of tree climbing as a child and always had a very romantic idea about it. I had my first public trapeze performance here, too [complete with Elise Overland—designed costume]. I call myself the Lead Butterfly—it was a hit, but probably because with a name like that people had low expectations.

Where do you think this will lead?

I want to start a full-size rig in London, or perhaps a collapsable one that I could travel with. As soon as I'm good enough, I'm giving up this art thing!