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For Immediate Use  
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Fowler Museum Presents the Traveling Exhibition  
*Nick Cave: Meet Me at the Center of the Earth*, Including Thirty-Five of the Artist's  
"Soundsuits," from Jan 10-May 30, 2010



"Whether Nick Cave's efforts qualify as fashion, body art or sculpture...they fall squarely under the heading of Must Be Seen to Be Believed." Roberta Smith, *The New York Times*

**Opening Night Party: Sat, Jan 9, 2010**  
Featuring music by KCRW's Jason Bentley

*Nick Cave: Meet Me at the Center of The Earth*—on display at the Fowler Museum from Jan 10–May 30, 2010—is the largest presentation of work by Chicago-based artist Nick Cave, featuring thirty-five of his "Soundsuits"—multi-layered, mixed-media sculptures named for the sounds made when the "suits" are performed.

Evocative of African, Caribbean and other ceremonial ensembles as well as *haute couture*, Cave's work explores issues of transformation, ritual, myth and identity through a layering of references and virtuosic construction, using materials as varied as yarn, beads, sequins, bottle caps, vintage toys, rusted iron sticks, twigs, leaves, and hair. Mad, humorous, visionary, glamorous and unexpected, the Soundsuits are created from scavenged ordinary materials and objects from both nature and culture, which Cave re-contextualizes into extraordinary works of art. The Fowler is the first LA-area museum to feature Cave's work and the only Southern California venue for this traveling exhibition.

The Fowler presentation of this exhibition holds particular meaning for the artist and for Los Angeles because Cave's first Soundsuit was sparked by the civil unrest in Los Angeles in 1992

**2-2-2** Fowler Museum to Present *Nick Cave: Meet Me at the Center of the Earth* from Jan 10-May 30, 2010 following the acquittal of the officers involved in the Rodney King beating. The Soundsuits almost always cover the whole body, erasing the identity of the wearer. Thus, the Soundsuits can be understood as coats of armor, shielding Cave from the day-to-day prejudice he encounters as an African American man, and facilitating a transformation into an invented realm of vibrant associations and meanings.

“In addition to this particular relevance for Los Angeles, Nick Cave’s Soundsuits resonate with many of the genres of global art for which the Fowler is known, including African masquerade ensembles, Haitian Vodou beaded flags, Carnival costumes and examples from our vast textile collections,” says Marla C. Berns, Shirley & Ralph Shapiro Director of the Fowler Museum. “This presentation is one in a succession of solo shows focusing on works by artists that speak to the Museum’s collections and exhibition history *and* highlight our capacity to provocatively consider interdisciplinary international work.” Other such artists with recent solo exhibitions at the Fowler are El Anatsui, Franco Mondini-Ruiz, Samta Benyahia and Edouard Duval-Carrié.

For this exhibition, Cave also employs animal imagery in ways as complex and multi-layered as the human-based suits. While conjuring the spiritual strength and power of animal totems used in ancient rituals from around the world, Cave’s Soundsuits also become vessels of transformation, and seek to connect us to the earth and the animals around us. Using wit and humor and a fanciful sensibility, Cave’s Soundsuits beg us to pay attention and to dream of a different future.

“To me, everything outside of myself is community. I don’t see myself as an artist but as a humanitarian using art to create change. My hope is that these new Soundsuits will cause people to find ways to live with each other, extend our compassion to other communities, and take care of our natural resources. If I can create an opportunity to bring people of all creeds, identities, and interests together, then I am doing my work,” said Nick Cave.

A video montage of the suits being worn in performance will give viewers a sense of the cacophony of sounds and sensations that are integral to the work. In addition, the Fowler is partnering with dancers and choreographers in UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures to create a series of performance-interventions (termed by Nick Cave’ Soundsuit Invasions’) in and around Los Angeles that will animate a special set of wearable Soundsuits. Times and locations for these **Soundsuit Invasions** will be announced via the Fowler’s Twitter feed: [www.twitter.com/FowlerMuseum](http://www.twitter.com/FowlerMuseum) and Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/FowlerMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/FowlerMuseum)

### **About Nick Cave**

Cave received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1982 and MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1989. He studied fiber art, but is committed to a broad spectrum of interests and disciplines. Cave is an associate professor and chairman of the Fashion Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where he teaches in the Fiber Arts Program. He has led workshops on topics such as *Extending the Body: Experiments in Clothing* and has designed, manufactured, and marketed his own line of men’s and women’s clothing. He has received numerous awards including the United States Artist Fellow Award (2006) and Joyce Award (2006), and his work has appeared in solo and group exhibitions across the United States and Europe.

### **Additional Information**

*Nick Cave: Meet Me at the Center of the Earth* has been organized by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco. The Los Angeles presentation has been generously supported by The James Irvine Foundation with additional funding from the Shirley and Ralph Shapiro Director’s Discretionary Fund, Patricia Rieff Anawalt, and the R.L. Shep Endowment Fund. Other support provided by Barbara Goldenberg, the Yvonne Lenart Public Programs Fund, the UCLA Arts Initiative, The Charitable Foundation, an anonymous donor, and Manus, the support group of the Fowler Museum. Official hotel sponsor: Hotel Angeleno. Official media sponsor: KCRW.

**The Fowler Museum at UCLA** is one of the country’s most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$10 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310/825-4361 or visit [fowler.ucla.edu](http://fowler.ucla.edu).