

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Disassembly

Steven Frost and David F. Hartwell

December 3, 2011-January 21, 2012

Gallery hours: Thursday and Friday, 11-5 Saturday 12-5

Opening Reception: Saturday December 3, 5-8 pm

Robert Bills Contemporary is pleased to present the opening of the exhibition *Joint Disassembly*, featuring the work of Steven Frost and David F. Hartwell. The works in this show explore the interesting and complex relationships between personal narratives, identifications, representations, allegiances, and how they relate to the broader public sphere and the creation of image culture in our society. Both artists draw attention to how the process of picking and choosing, assembling and disassembling is not merely the purview of art practice but an integral part of the way that individuals shape their lives. Playful and coy, the objects they produce demonstrate the extent to which individuals can control what is and is not revealed to others

Steven Frost's work in this show explores connections as varied as the bond between backyard wrestling bouts, the International Mr. Leather Contest and learning to macramé in the 4H Club. The link that Frost draws is that the *pageantry* of athletics and craft in many ways questions and reconfigures our understanding of both amateur mastery and the performance of secular but, for many, still sacred rituals.

Frost employs methods of patch working, upholstery, macramé, painting and leatherwork to build artworks that combine desperate but convergent histories. Works like his embellished paddles exist as tools for violence, sexual role-play, and the cult of embellishment. Each piece in this show has its own personality and implied use, which appear as set pieces for a series of joyful predetermined contests.

Using snapshots from now distant parties in now distant locations, David Hartwell's photographs refer to the struggle and process of remembering and communicating the past. Through framing, obscuring and redirection, he calls attention to how these images were created. This process refers to the many layers of decision-making, often overlooked, that occur when snapshots are taken or memories are formed. His images emphasize the limits and possibilities of description in photography. Moreover, they emphatically drive home the power imbalance that can exist between the photographer and the viewer, the individual and the public.

Robert Bills Contemporary is dedicated to finding and introducing artists in all media whose work embodies well-executed conceptual depth. It was named one of the top ten hottest galleries at NEXT 2010. The gallery is located in Chicago's West Loop at 222 North Desplaines Street at Lake on the lower level. For general inquiries please contact the Gallery Director, Hannah Klemm, at hannah@robertbillscontemporary.com, or call 312.234.9091.