

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Colby Bird: *Hope Goes with Man to the Foot of the Gallows*  
May 28 – July 18, 2015  
Opening reception: Thursday, May 28, 6–8 pm  
Artist's talk: 7 pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Hope Goes with Man to the Foot of the Gallows*, an exhibition of photographs and sculpture by Colby Bird. This is the artist's fourth solo presentation at Lora Reynolds Gallery.

Colby Bird's most recent photographs are of objects (e.g., a candle, a rose, a statuette in a garden, a knife next to a raw steak) and a woman whose identity is never fully revealed.

The images are enlargements of Polaroid negatives (the component of instant film one peels away from the positive print and typically throws away). After scanning the negative and printing it large-scale, Bird paints each print with layers of wood stain until the paper is saturated. The resulting images have a velvety texture and a rich brown-black tone. Each image is cut in two, each half is framed separately, and the two halves pinch a piece of fruit between them (usually fresh produce, unless it is a likeness Bird carved from a block of wood).

This body of work is closely tied to Bird's recent move from Brooklyn to upstate New York. Without the distractions of a major city, Bird's thoughts have turned inward: toward evaluating his self-worth, his personal relationships, and ultimately, his mortality.

Bird embraces his own self-doubt, openly struggling to reconcile his determination to spend his life making art with the more traditional lifestyle he knew as a child. Artists are thinkers and dreamers—sometimes typecast as idlers—but Bird distances himself from any appearance of laziness. He prizes labor and obsessive hard work. By pursuing his practice every day—shooting pictures, painting prints with wood stain, sawing and sanding raw wood into sculptural form, and considering every moment and experience for potential inspiration—he fights off feelings of professional and intellectual inadequacy.

A new labor-intensive challenge Bird tackles with this body of work is the framing of his own photographs. His woodworking skills are far from masterful, but perfection is not the goal—Bird wants to establish a measure of economic accountability. Artwork is expensive, and its valuation is abstract and subjective. An example of a more straightforward transaction is paying a craftsman to frame a photograph. By framing his own prints, Bird is aligning his efforts with a profession more widely relatable than art-making and searching for concrete value and meaning in the objects he produces.

Despite the conceptual framework through which Bird filters his imagery—excessive labor, handmade frames, bisected photographs, slowly decaying fruit—at its core, the work is about love, loss, and self-reflection. In *Hope Goes with Man to the Foot of the Gallows*, Bird pulls back the veil of propriety to hint at his own personal insecurities, feelings of guilt, and pursuit of pleasure.

Colby Bird was born in Austin in 1978. He has had solo exhibitions at the University Galleries at Texas State University (San Marcos), Okay Mountain (Austin), and in New York, Los Angeles, and East Hampton. He has participated in exhibitions at the Aspen Art Museum, Drawing Center (New York), Autocenter (Berlin), Hagedorn Foundation Gallery (Atlanta), and Arthouse at the Jones Center (Austin). Bird lives and works in Cossackie, New York.