

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Colby Bird: A Selection of House Lamps
January 26 – March 9, 2013

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *A Selection of House Lamps*, a project room exhibition of new work by Colby Bird. This is the artist's third solo presentation at Lora Reynolds Gallery.

The show includes 28 lamps from the original installation of 100 presented at Texas State University. Each lamp is handmade: light bulbs painstakingly married with objects like bricks, 2x4s, and chair parts. After sanding, sawing, whittling, drilling, and staining, Bird is able to transform mundane materials into simple, elegant, associative forms. Each lamp ranges in size from 5 to 36 inches in height and 5 to 24 inches in width.

The primary medium of this installation is light itself. Bird's photographic practice accounts for his overdeveloped sensitivity to—and reverence for—light and its infinitely variable character, temperature, and intensity. In addition, Bird eagerly reaps the ubiquitous utility of electricity and artificial light. Bird's lamps are a fetishistic—perhaps even idolatrous—gesture that celebrates modern-day convenience.

Bird's lamps will run continuously throughout the exhibition. Some will inevitably burn out and require replacement during the course of the installation. Bird is interested in the maintenance the piece will require; his work often demands a continuous measure of labor from a gallery attendant, collector, or museum preparator. The lamps are also dependent upon the labors of city workers distantly removed from the piece: the men and women who toil away at the power plants responsible for the generation and distribution of electricity.

But Bird is not critical of the modern infrastructure we enjoy; he is grateful. This piece extols the dependability of all of the various technologies we have developed collectively and relish together. The conceptual underpinnings of the piece are indicative of Bird's intense awareness, joy, and curiosity.

As ardently engaged with the past as he is the present, Bird's installation calls to mind moments in art history ranging from primitive fertility idols to Jeff Wall's re-imagining of the opening chapter of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Wall made the Invisible Man visible in this photograph of a man in a cramped, cluttered room with a sea of lightbulbs engulfing the ceiling. Bird's lamps also find parallels in rudimentary Paleolithic Venus figurines, not only in appearance but also in the awe, wonder, debt, and thanks the votives inspired in their idolaters—the mysteries of the reproductive cycle are in some ways similar to that of electricity.

Rough and sometimes crude but socially and historically engaged, Bird's project demonstrates a disposition for both youthful insouciance and unabashed earnestness. Although Bird's work may seem to have a casual relationship to fabrication and assemblage, it is rich with allusions to art history and represents Bird's intense engagement with contemporary culture.

Colby Bird was born in Austin in 1978 and lives and works in New York. Bird has recently completed solo projects in the Art Positions section of Art Basel Miami Beach and the University Galleries at Texas State University. He participated in *The Anxiety of Photography*, a group show at the Aspen Art Museum that traveled to Arthouse at the Jones Center (Austin). His work is included in the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York).