

HEMPHILL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, May 13, 2011

CONTACT:

Shira Farber
HEMPHILL Fine Arts
1515 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
202.234.5601
shira@hemphillfinearts.com
www.hemphillfinearts.com



Digital working proof for "Prospects", 2011

Workingman Collective: Prospects and Provisions June 18–August 20, 2011

Washington DC—Hemphill opens *Workingman Collective: Prospects and Provisions* on Saturday, June 18, 2011, with a public reception from 6:30–8:30pm. The exhibition will remain on view through August 20, 2011.

Most artists work toward a singular vision. If a social issue is addressed, it is done so rhetorically with no overt response required of the viewer. Yet a recent rise in artist collectives opens up an opportunity to consider something other than rhetorical statements. While contemporary collaborative art making has occasionally pointed to social and political concerns, rarely have artist collectives delved into the nature of collaboration and cooperation. Workingman Collective does not work toward a singular vision. The Collective is a collaborative in which viewer participation is tantamount. The process employed by the Collective moves through stages: from the collection of information, to the construction of objects, to the anticipated participation of the viewer. Typically viewers' interactions are recorded and another layer of responses is solicited. The Collective treats each stage equally, experientially and aesthetically, making it impossible to identify one object or action as the sole location or penultimate moment of the art experience. The Collective's collaborations depend upon a participatory dynamic between the artists of the Collective and their audience.

Now more than ever it is necessary for people to find new ways of working together. It is apparent that sustaining a livable planet will require more from us than advanced technologies or legislation. Workingman Collective is too "working-man" to claim it has broad world-saving ambitions. But it is easy to see in the collaborations within the Collective, and between the Collective and its audience, novel insights into the creative possibilities of cooperation. The primary members of the Workingman Collective—Tom Ashcraft, Janis Goodman and Peter Winant—often speak of the space between the real and the imagined. For an artist focusing on presenting a singular vision, the real as well as the imagined reside in the traditional art experience. For the Collective and its participating audience the imagined is limitless and continuous.

Continued

The exhibition at Hemphill will include a double swing set covered with numerous steel arms that hold potted plants capable of removing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the air. Titled "Swing," this work entertains and physically mobilizes the viewer while cleaning the air. The plants will be watered daily by a team of volunteers using water from rain barrels situated outside 1515 14th Street. These rain barrels, emblazoned with Workingman Collective's logo, will become a permanent fixture on the property as both a relic of the project and a reminder of water conservation issues.

Also on display will be an original backpack designed and patented by Trapper Lloyd F. Nelson in 1924 (U.S. patent # 1,505,661) and once owned by a train conductor and adventurer named C.D. Beebe. The backpack served as the launching point for Workingman Collective's creation of a variety of provisions for the modern adventurer, including a custom designed backpack based on the original Trapper Nelson patent. Fabricated at a workshop in Pittsburgh, PA, the waxed canvas backpack is available in an edition of seven. An HO scale train set on an elevated track, and a single-sided ping pong table that allows the player to compete against a video projection of a ping pong champion, are just a couple of the contraptions and products brought together in this exhibition. In each case, the objects on view are a suggestion of the relationship that might unfold between idea, object, action, and interaction.

What is the Workingman Collective?

We are a collaborative group of artists and other professionals whose membership, goals and missions change with each project.

We are basic.

We are curious.

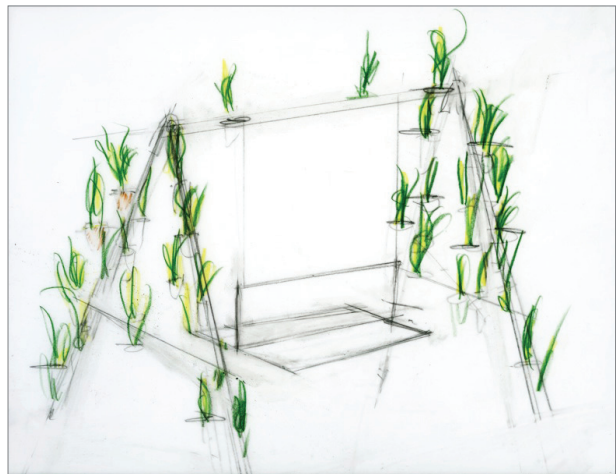
We are pedestrians.

We are interested in process, invention, chance, and the public.

Sincerely,

The Workingman Collective

Your ideas are ours.



Working drawing for "Swing" (detail), 2011, vellum, 18" x 24"

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00am–5:00pm, and by appointment

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR REPRODUCTION.

###