



PORTLAND MUSEUM of ART

NEWS RELEASE

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PORTLAND MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS THE WORK OF PORTLAND ARTIST AARON T STEPHAN

(Editor's note: There is no period after the "T" in Aaron T Stephan's name)



(Portland, Maine) This fall, the Portland Museum of Art (PMA) will present Aaron T Stephan: *To Borrow, Cut, Copy, and Steal*, Portland-based artist Aaron T Stephan's first solo exhibition at the PMA. Stephan, who is known for his take-offs of familiar gestures by artists throughout the history of modern and contemporary art, will present four sculptural installations and a small selection of works on paper that convey his wit and his cheeky dialogue with the conventions and procedures of the art world. On view September 6, 2014 through February 8, 2015, *To Borrow, Cut, Copy, and Steal* is part of the PMA's *Circa* series, which features the work of living artists from Maine and beyond.

Stephan will install a bouquet of drooping pedestals in the PMA's Selma Wolf Black Great Hall, which will mock the perceived formality of an art museum and play off of the grid of colors in Mark Wethli's mural, *Transom* (2003). Continuing the humor from the first floor installation, the fourth floor gallery will feature the work *An Awkward Meeting of Painting and Sculpture*, in which a Lichtenstein-like stroke of "paint" (rubber) will drape a finely constructed mahogany sawhorse. The gallery will also include a series of prints that appropriates Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* as well as the media enterprise that the painting has inspired in our contemporary culture.

Stephan has also created a series of rarely exhibited audio recordings of conversations with phone-sex operators, in which he asked the women questions about art and tried in earnest to solicit

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conversation. The conversations, which have been edited for length, veer in the directions of childhood memories and formal analysis, and suggest a friendly tussle between the speakers for control of the conversation. Here, as elsewhere, Stephan impinges on another's territory, using both literal-mindedness and a taste for the absurd to create room for serious inquiry into the standards and conventions of art in our time.

Raised in upstate New York, Stephan attended Purchase College at the State University of New York, where he graduated with a BFA in sculpture. He earned his MFA degree from the Maine College of Art. Stephan has exhibited widely in Maine and beyond, with recent solo projects at the de Cordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts (2013) and Southern New Hampshire University (2014).

Circa is a series of exhibitions featuring the work of living artists from Maine and beyond. Funded in part by a grant from the Maine Arts Commission, an independent state agency supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. Generously supported by S. Donald Sussman. Corporate sponsorship is provided by The VIA Agency, and media sponsorship is provided by *The Portland Phoenix*.

(Image credit: Aaron T Stephan (United States, born 1974), *An Awkward Meeting of Painting and Sculpture*, 2012, latex, mahogany, brass. Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Museum Purchase 2012.40 a,b. © Aaron T Stephan)

For any image requests, please email pr@portlandmuseum.org.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

The [Portland Museum of Art](http://portlandmuseum.org) (PMA), Maine's premier art museum, showcases fine and decorative arts from the 18th century to the present. From Winslow Homer and Andrew Wyeth to Pablo Picasso and Claude Monet, the PMA features three centuries of art and architecture. The museum is located at Seven Congress Square in downtown Portland. Hours are: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday. Memorial Day through Columbus Day, the PMA is open on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Third Thursdays open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and students with I.D., \$6 for youth ages 13 to 17, and children 12 and under are free. Special exhibition fees may apply. Admission is free on Friday evenings from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. No admission is required to visit the PMA Café and Store. Winslow Homer Studio tours are available by reservation. For more information, call (207) 775-6148 or visit portlandmuseum.org.

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