

June 2004

New Work by William Pope.L and Phil Frost

**On view at the University at Albany Art Museum
University at Albany, State University of New York**

June 29 through September 3, 2004

Opening Reception: Tuesday, June 29, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Free and open to the public

ALBANY, NY — The University Art Museum is pleased to announce that William Pope.L and Phil Frost will each present new and recent works in two concurrent exhibitions at the museum this summer. The museum's first floor will feature *Five Ways to Say the Same Sadness: New Work by William Pope.L*. Included in his exhibition are a new video, drawings, and several site-specific installations, all of which explore the contradictions inherent in contemporary consumerist culture. The museum's second floor will feature *mALORsUDas sOLarMB: Selected Works by Phil Frost*. Frost will exhibit new paintings, drawings, and several onsite assemblage paintings in which he transforms found objects and tag sale discards into objects of wonder through a highly personal system of elaborate signs and symbols. In his own words, Frost plans to turn the museum's second floor into "a gigantic and beautiful altar-like place".

William Pope.L is internationally recognized for performances and installations that consistently challenge audiences to reexamine deeply entrenched and uniquely American ideas about class, racial stereotypes, and our relationship with the rest of the world. Pope.L is no stranger to controversy. Drawing on art historical traditions of radical performance art and public interventions, his work calls attention to the paradoxes of race and confounds preconceptions of what "black art" should be. His installations raise questions about art as a commodity and urge closer examination of everyday experiences; in a single proposed sculpture Pope.L targets contemporary culture's quest for instant gratification with references to Popsicles, O.J. Simpson, High Art, and African-American stereotypes.

Underlying his trenchant social critique is a fierce sense of humor, an unabashed playfulness, and a deep human consciousness that in his own words stems as much from Argentine writer, Jorge Luis Borges as it does from American comedian, Richard Pryor. "Like them," he says, "when confronted with the irresolvable, I revert to play. I want to ignore the oncoming locomotive, and I also want to mount it and ride all the way into the tunnel and out the other side."

In September 2003, Pope. L presented a lecture at the University at Albany Art Museum entitled *My Art Practice and Welcome To It: Tradition, Family, and Peanut Butter* which centered on his personal responses to the social inequality that he sees as a persistent feature of contemporary art practice.

Pope.L is a recipient of numerous grants and residencies including a Guggenheim Fellowship Award (2004) and three National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships. He has had recent solo exhibitions and performances at Artists Space (New York) and The Project (New York and Los Angeles). His work is on view this summer at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art and has been featured in exhibitions at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, The Drawing Center (New York), and at the 2002 Whitney Biennial. His first museum-scale retrospective, *eRacism* is traveling to venues throughout the United States and Europe and is accompanied by a comprehensive monograph, *William Pope L: The William Pope. L and Phil Frost at the University Art Museum*--page 2

Friendliest Black Artist in America, published by MIT Press. Pope.L teaches in the Department of Theater and Rhetoric at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine.

Phil Frost takes his garage grunge aesthetic and harnesses it into an effusive mix of personal symbolism, pantheistic spirituality, childhood memory, and a revivalist's reverence for all things old. Bold, obsessive, and urgent, his work begins with carefully collaged found materials and is unified by an ornate field of calibrated doodles drawn in Wite-Out® correction pen. An equal passion for art history and contemporary urban life dictates the rhythm of his idiosyncratic visual language made up of dots, dashes, hearts, and swirls and rendered with devotional specificity.

Frost's work ranges in size from small-scale pen and ink drawings to murals and huge altar-like assemblages. Wooden baseball bats, old footballs, gym lockers, tree limbs, Coke bottles, and railroad ties all make their way into the work. References to Egyptian hieroglyphics, Islamic tracery, medieval illuminations, and 1960s psychedelia bring an oddly elegant decorum and a personal order to the things Frost retrieves from the collective trash heap of daily living.

Frost's work shares similarities with other artists whose work is inspired by street culture and outsider art including Margaret Kilgallen, Barry McGee, and Chris Johanson. His ability to make art that bridges disparate worlds allows him to occupy an artistic presence in and outside the contemporary art world.

Frost has had solo exhibitions at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia (2002) and Jack Shainman Gallery (2001). He is a recent recipient of grants from The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation (2004) and The Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2004). His work has been featured in group shows at Brooklyn Fireproof in Brooklyn (2003); Deitch Projects in New York (2002); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco (2001); Exit Art in New York (2001); and American Fine Arts Co. in New York (2001). Frost recently completed a mural for *Beautiful Losers* at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati. His work will be featured in an accompanying book by the same name published by D.A.P./ Distributed Art Publishers, Inc.

Frost has also done album covers for DJ Shadow and Sick of it All, and recently designed sneakers and the shoebox they come in for DC Shoes.

For further information or visual materials, please call (518) 442-4035 or visit our website at [www. albany.edu/museum](http://www.albany.edu/museum).

MUSEUM HOURS: Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. , Saturday and Sunday noon to 4 p.m.