



On Some Faraway Beach (detail), 2013
Urethane, MDF, and silver plating, 72 x 36 x 4 inches

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Virgil Marti *Forest Park*

September 5 – October 18, 2014

Artist's reception: Friday, September 5, 5:30-7:30pm

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *Forest Park*, the first solo exhibition of Philadelphia artist Virgil Marti at the gallery. Marti will bring together new works with other recontextualized projects, highlighting his own investigation of the sublime and romanticism throughout history. Marti's art merges his passion for Americana with his distinctive explorations of the world of domestic interiors.

The exhibition will be on view September 5th through October 18th with a reception for the artist on Friday, September 5th, from 5:30-7:30pm. The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication surveying Marti's works with an essay by critic Hilarie M. Sheets.

Works on display will include new "looking glasses", sculptural furniture pieces, and textile prints— each pointing to specific historical touchstones that are the rich foundation of Marti's imaginative renderings. For example, the looking glasses take their formal cues from the late 18th century Chippendale-style mirrors; an homage to the Philadelphia craftsmen who produced a distinctly more elaborate Rococo style. Using his own period floorboards from his studio as a model for casting their surfaces, Marti silvers and now colors them with unique palettes. Their colors reference the gamut of Virgil's explorations— from Hudson River School paintings, his own travel photographs, and iconic 1960s posters.

[continued on reverse]

In her essay, Sheets states, “Marti is fascinated by the trickle down of fine art to popular decoration, by how some variation of a Jackson Pollock painting ends up in a bowling alley. Mining the gap between high and low, his objects of allure consistently subvert aesthetic hierarchies and offer something other, but never lesser, in return.”

The show’s title evokes Marti’s early encounters with hippie culture in the St. Louis, MO park of the same name, while his works create a novel and extraordinary place within the gallery. In the reimagined *Forest Park*, the artist’s concrete benches overlook the majestic vistas of “Scenic America.” Through his innovative methods in the studio and unique approaches to history, Marti continues to transform the realm of material culture into imaginative sites for contemplation and possibility.

Virgil Marti was notably selected for the 2004 Whitney Biennial where he exhibited his installation *Grow Room* (2002). His work has been shown at institutions including The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA; the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA; The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; Participant Inc., New York, NY; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Visual Arts Center, Richmond, VA; and the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT.

Marti is one of the preeminent contemporary artists living and working in Philadelphia today. His acclaimed installations such as those at Eastern State Penitentiary in 1995, the Morris Gallery at PAFA in 2001, The Galleries at Moore College of Art and Design as part of Philagrafika 2010, and the Institute of Contemporary Art in 2010-11, have expanded the possibilities for art installation in Philadelphia. The artist is also a Senior Visiting Critic in the MFA Program at PAFA, a lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, and a faculty member at Tyler School of Art.

He has been the recipient of the Art Matters Fellowship (1994), the Pew Fellowship in the Arts (1995), the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship (1997, 2003, 2005), the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (1997), and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2011). He was the second invited artist in the Katherine Stein Sachs and Keith L Sachs Curator Program at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania. His first large-scale outdoor sculpture, *Five Standards (Dazzle)*, was permanently installed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in 2013.

Marti has previously exhibited work at Locks Gallery in the group exhibitions *The Way Things Are* (2012) and *Fête* (2006).

Locks Gallery is located at 600 Washington Square South in Philadelphia, PA. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm. For additional information, please contact Locks Gallery at 215.629.1000, 215.629.3868 fax, or info@locksgallery.com.

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