



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Johnston Foster

*Bone Pendulum in Motley*

October 11th - November 10th, 2019

Opening reception: Friday, October 11th, 7pm - 9:30pm

**Freight+Volume** is pleased to announce ***Bone Pendulum in Motley***, an exhibition of sculptural assemblages by Johnston Foster. Expanding upon motifs suggested in ***Souvenirs of the Suzerain***, the artist's 2019 exhibition at **Arts+Leisure**, the works on display deconstruct the material scaffolding of our built environment, prompting the viewer to re-examine the material fabric of their daily lives and its relation to overarching natural cycles of death and decomposition. Radically recontextualizing the ubiquitous, otherwise banal plastics and disposable detritus of post-Capitalist society, Foster's work probes the bounds of sculpture and assemblage; laying bare the seams of his practice by exposing bits of PVC garden hose and coax cable, among an encyclopedic array of other debris, Foster's work simultaneously unravels and compresses, waxing and waning between parallel narratives of physical drama and metaphoric suggestion.

Likening his artistic process to a sort of "homegrown alchemy", Foster works from intuition, allowing spontaneity and the constraints of his scavenged materials to guide him, rather than preconceived conceptual frameworks. Foster's work is intensely evocative, and often manifests a riddle-like quality, evident in *Valley of the Universe*, one of the three sculptures of solitary human skulls on display. Nested within its hollowed-out cranium is a verdant oasis, replete with trees formed from cut yoga mats and a waterfall of poured glue, a microcosmic environment that suggests the duality of life and death as well as humanity's transience in the face of the eternal cycles of nature.

The synthetic (and largely "suburban") materials used in the work add an almost ironic dimension, yet also challenge our understanding of their existence as "dead" objects wholly detached from the natural world. In *Untitled/Cactus Bird*, which depicts several birds impaired on a group of cacti, the synthetic components (primarily PVC siding and strips of garden hose) coalesce in a quasi-organic manner, paralleling their natural counterparts, yet express their origin through their distinctly inorganic textures and surface finishes. Similarly, in *Cul-de-Sac*, Foster delineates the nerves and tendons of a flayed arm with such visceral accuracy that one almost expects the severed electrical-wire veins to gush blood. Here, imbuing his found materials with a sense of inner propulsion, if not human or biological "life", Foster epitomizes the aforementioned transformative notion of alchemy.

Foster's imagery in ***Bone Pendulum in Motley*** frequently alludes to mortality. In *Early Bird*, a Blue Jay bites on a piece of cable attached to a heart, recalling the proverb that "the early bird gets the worm", albeit suffused with more fatalistic undertones. The mutilated snake in *The Long Division* is an almost exact facsimile of Benjamin Franklin's *Join or Die* woodcut; by integrating national mythos into scenes of natural life and decay, Foster suggests that human societies have the same ultimate fate as the animals and discarded goods that recur in his sculptures. Showing two horses being ridden by



skeletons, *Pony Up* rather grimly recapitulates this idea, showing two horses being ridden by skeletons, emphasizing the inevitability of death.

**Johnston Foster** was born in 1978 in South Boston, VA and raised in Williamsburg, VA. He received a BFA in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2001, an MFA from Hunter College, NYC in 2005 and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2003. He has exhibited widely throughout the United States and Europe in solo and group exhibitions including P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, 21c Museum, MASS MOCA, Yerba Buena Center of the Arts and The Contemporary Art Center of Virginia. His work is found in collections internationally. He recently completed a commission for a permanent, immersive installation titled 'BuzzKill' in the 3,000 sq. ft. dining room and lounge of the 21c Museum and Hotel in Bentonville, AK. Foster lives and works in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada with his wife Amie Cunningham and three sons Wolfgang, Dutch and Viggo. Please join us for the opening reception with the artist on Friday, October 11th, from 7pm to 9:30pm. For more information, contact [nick@freightandvolume.com](mailto:nick@freightandvolume.com), or call 212.691.7700