

BMOCA



InsideOut 2020 - 2021

Steven Frost
Helen and Alice at the Museum

February 26, 2020 –
March 15, 2021

Steven Frost: *Helen and Alice at the Museum*

Steven Frost is an artist and educator located in Boulder, Colorado, where he has been instrumental in spreading the transformative nature of weaving and textiles through popular community-based gatherings. His approach combines narrative elements of personal memorabilia with queer culture, and the results take craft sensibilities into formally engaging visual territory. Influences include everything from suburban kitsch to Anni Albers' textiles, with Frost experimenting from the center of these disparate concepts.

In his new large-scale installation for the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Frost elevates the personal story of his Aunt Helen and her partner, Alice, to a position that cannot be overlooked. Draped over the second story of the historic brick building, an enormous green and white woven grid partially covers the exterior walls. Imagination might dictate that it also blankets the roof, although this isn't the case. Made of plastic webbing as found on ordinary lawn chairs, Frost exaggerates this common pattern to an almost aggressive level. Color and scale are pushed to create maximum volume, while simultaneously telling the tender story of lifelong partnership and simple backyard pleasure. The contrast between the dramatic wrap of the building and the intimate personal history that motivates Frost is key to the experience of this work.

Seen from the ground below, the intensity of the gridded weave will welcome questioning visitors with several options to understand what is being presented. Activism, storytelling, performance and a rigorous pursuit of loud color are included in the mix of possible readings for this epic tribute to a lawn chair.

We are drawn into the story, laid out above our heads in an adept use of materials that immediately garners our attention. Texture plays a role in our perception; unreachable and barely visible from the ground, the senses feel the familiar touch of the plastic weaving. Our own memories of these webbed chairs are called up, bigger than life, waving overhead.

Frost literally weaves together ideas, people, and materials in celebration of the personally political. His use of color is intentionally brash, his references real and poignant. Undeniably bold, '*Helen and Alice at the Museum*' will remain in place for one year. In response to its demise, Frost will create tote bags from the salvaged webbed material as it is removed from the building façade. Available in the museum gift store, these future tote bags will remind us that Helen and Alice were real people who confronted issues of acceptance for their partnership and did not believe it was safe for them to be who they were. That is a lot of history to carry around in a tote, but Steven Frost will make it easy for us.

—Essay by Kate Petley



Above image: Steven Frost, *Helen + Alice's Garden*, Springfield, MA, 1967. Photograph. Courtesy of the Artist.

Artist Biography

Steven Frost

Textiles are a powerful medium – their association with the body and garments evoke tactile memories. Using weaving, Steven Frost combines traditional materials like yarn and cotton with non-traditional weaving materials from a range of sources, exploring the ways history and time are embedded in materials. His materials evoke specific narratives and stories, referencing aspects of the artist's personal and family history, the history of the LGBTQ rights movement, and the recent Women's Marches, among other topics. In workshops and interactive performance events, the artist invites participants to weave, using laser-cut versions of a traditional backstrap loom. By bringing together groups to weave collectively, Frost explores the ways weaving can act as a metaphor for communities working together.

Steven Frost (b. 1981, Woodsville, NH) has been featured in solo and two-person exhibitions nationally. Frost is the founder of the Colorado Sewing Rebellion, an offshoot of the original Sewing Rebellion founded by Frau Fiber (Carole Francis Lung). He is a co-founder of the Experimental Weaving Residency (Boulder, CO). He holds an MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is an instructor in the Media Studies Department at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

BMoCA InsideOut features rotating commissions from local and international artists who push the boundaries of art within the public realm. Bringing the conversation beyond the museum's walls, the projects aim to generate responsible criticism, foster active public discourse, and pique the community's interest in the evolving field of contemporary art. A site for temporary artistic intervention, BMoCA InsideOut is an exhibition platform that offers unexpected creative encounters. The only constant is the temporary nature of each project.

InsideOut Events

Opening Reception

The webbing used to create the *Helen and Alice at the Museum* installation will be up-cycled into farmer's market bags and sold through the Museum Store once the exhibition closes.

Other BMOCA Exhibitions

BMOCA

Night Reels: The Work of Stacey Steers

January 30 - May 25, 2020

Margaretta Gilboy: Flying in the Hands of Time: A Retrospective

January 30 - May 25, 2020

BMOCA @ Macky

Paul Gillis: When Kingship Ascends to Heaven

January 14 - May 1, 2020

Guest Curated by Simon Zalkind

Present Box

Candice Davis: Lifting as We Climb

March 5 - 22, 2020

Guest Curated by Rose van Mierlo

Fall 2020 Exhibition

John Torreano: The Big Picture - Painting From the Universe

September 3, 2020 - January 17, 2021

Guest Curated by Julie Augur

Nyeema Morgan: THE STEM. THE FLOWER. THE ROOT. THE SEED

September 3, 2020 - January 17, 2021

Guest Curated by Rose van Mierlo

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