

BORTOLAMI

**Tom Burr
Dressage
October 26 – November 2, 2013**

Bortolami is pleased to present “Dressage”, six contingent sculptures that together form a parallel to the six levels of training of Classical Dressage. These stages are loosely translated from German as Rhythm and Regularity; Relaxation and Suppleness; Contact; Impulsion; Straightness; Collection. Dressage continues Burr’s overarching interest in structures and performances that control, discipline and contain bodies, while producing aesthetic affect and notions of beauty. The materiality of the six sculptures is consistent throughout. Black steel armatures, bronze faux bois planks, and individual elements of actual Dressage tack (saddle, lunge lines, bridles, stud chains, reins, stirrups, and so on) are combined into the six distinct configurations. Each of the elements of Tack and the various aids, also exhibit an abstracted presence within the work, removed from their function on the body of the horse. Initially derived from military training, equestrian Dressage evolved into a high art form melding standards of perfection and beauty with a system of completion. What was once the harnessing of force on the battlefield is now a visual presentation of the mastery of muscles and maneuvers between the rider and the horse. The six sculptures are meant as the material suggestion of the physicality of the exercises that bring the horse to “collection”, giving them weight, bulk and a constricting tangibility. At the same time the works open up to the space of exhibition, incorporating that space and situation into the essence of the work.