

Contemporary Art Daily

A Daily Journal of International Exhibitions

“Off Broadway” at Wattis

February 25th, 2015



Works, props, and lectures by: Rhea Anastas, Katarina Burin, Michaela Eichwald, Vincent Fecteau/Diane Simpson/==, Frieda Grafe/Filmkritik, Margaret Harrison, Tom Jimmerson, Tobias Kaspar, Heinz-Peter Knes, Janette Laverrière, Adam Linder, Shahryar Nashat, Paulina Olowska, PROVENCE, Phel Steinmetz, Danh Vo, Michaela Wunsch

Venue: Wattis, San Francisco

Exhibition Title: Off Broadway

Concept and Realisation: Nairy Baghramian

Date: January 21 – February 28, 2015

[Click here to view slideshow](#)





Full gallery of images, press release and link available after the jump.

Images:







Images courtesy of Wattis, San Francisco

Press Release:

A central idea for Nairy Baghramian's exhibition is a consideration of the nature of the prop. Her departure point is a scene from *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort*, a 1967 musical film by Jacques Demy, starring Catherine Deneuve and Gene Kelly. In several scenes of the film, Demy uses artworks as props to help build his characters and their relationships to the world. Instead of being independent works of art, the objects perform cameos or stand-ins for the film's plot, such as a portrait of an "ideal woman."

The starting point for the project is to pose two questions. One is to examine how the perception of a critical failure or a lack of success—or the identification of problems—can actually ignite closer interest. The second begins with the observation that contemporary visual art routinely leverages other disciplines such as literature, dance, film, magazines, fashion, interior design, architecture to add value and extend the notion of art. But what if this cultural relation is reciprocal: what is the status and efficacy of art moving in the other direction, or playing a supporting role such as in *Les Demoiselles*? What if an exhibition embraces the notion of art performing a supporting role? (Nairy Baghramian)

To address these questions, Baghramian splits the gallery in two: on one side is a traditional white wall, and the other side is "storage." One by one, each work is displayed on the white wall for a short time: they maintain their autonomy as works of art and assert themselves as the protagonists of their own story. Each work then joins the others in storage and becomes another "prop," ready to serve a supporting role in someone else's story.

Link: ["Off Broadway" at Wattis](#)

Tags: [Adam Linder](#), [CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts](#), [Danh Vo](#), [Frieda Grafe/Filmkritik](#), [Group Show](#), [Heinz Peter-Knes](#), [Institution](#), [Janette Laverrière](#), [Katarina Burin](#), [Margaret Harrison](#), [Michaela Eichwald](#), [Michaela Wunsch](#), [Nairy Baghramian](#), [Paulina Olowska](#), [Phel Steinmetz](#), [Provence](#), [Rhea Anastas](#), [San Francisco](#), [Shahryar Nashat](#), [Tobias Kaspar](#), [Tom Jimmerson](#), [United States](#), [Vincent Fecteau/Diane Simpson/≡](#), [Wattis](#)

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