



Nairy Baghramian
Butcher, Barber, Angler & others

Friday 27 November – Sunday 23 January 2010

Studio Voltaire is pleased to present a new commission by the Berlin based artist, Nairy Baghramian. The exhibition will be the artist's first solo presentation in the United Kingdom and follows a year long residency in London made in collaboration with the Berlin Senate's Cultural Affairs Department, the Whitechapel Gallery and Studio Voltaire.

In her sculptures and installations, Nairy Baghramian often utilises and references modernist design, literature and theory to explore aspects of social and political relationships. Central to her exhibition at Studio Voltaire, the artist has created a new body of sculptural work that can be read as a conversation between a group of protagonists. Through the use of forms that refer to functional objects, such as a meat bench, waste paper baskets and a salon hairdryer, particular professions are suggested. The allegorical nature of the works suggests Baghramian's interest in ideas of labour, employment, identity and social space. This has partly been influenced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' *The German Ideology* (1845), which offers a version of utopia where there is a shared division of labour – for example one could be a barber in the morning, a butcher in the afternoon and a thinker in the evening. The work also raises questions about the role and status of the artist and 'the others' in a world in which professions are no longer secure.

Working at the threshold of design and sculpture, Baghramian has made a number of projects engaging with interior architecture. As a part of the exhibition at Studio Voltaire, there is a series of sculptures that suggest the people could sit, rest or lean on them and join in on the conversation happening between the central characters. As a part of *The Schinkel Pavillon* programme at Berlin Biennale 5 (2008), the artist collaborated with the designer Janette Laverrière (Born 1909, Switzerland). The pair created a display structure that housed a number of Laverrière's design objects.

The display structure elaborated on the particular non-functional elements central to Laverrière's practice, such as literary and historical references, bringing out different political and social resonances within the objects.

This exhibition is a part of The International Residency Programme, in partnership with the Berlin Senate's Cultural Affairs Department and the Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Supported by The Henry Moore Foundation, Fatima Maleki and Valeria & Gregorio Napoleone.



About the artist:

Baghramian (born Iran, 1971) has an increasingly important presence within contemporary sculptural practice with Continental Europe following a number of major solo institutional exhibitions and inclusion in a number of international biennials. Previous solo exhibitions include *The Walker's Day Off*, Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2008) *Affaires. Ein semiotisches Haus, das nie gebaut wurde*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (2008) and *Es ist ausser Haus*, Kunsthalle Basel (2006).