

ARTFORUM



D'Ette Nogle, Schrank #1, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 19 3/4 x 22 5/8".

BERLIN

D'Ette Nogle

SWEETWATER

Leipziger Straße 56-58

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For her Berlin debut, American artist D'Ette Nogle takes Sigmar Polke's 1963 painting *Schrank* (Wardrobe) as inspiration and title, developing his one line and two keyholes into a three-room presentation that probes the tragicomic ways meaning accumulates and dissipates when we look at art.

The exhibition's centerpiece is a two-hour long video called *materialschrank, 2020*, composed entirely of found imagery and overlaid with deadpan narration from various characters. Nogle plays all of them and proves as deft a performer as she is a teacher. Like the best art, *materialschrank* both alerts viewers to new connections between monolithic appearances and reality, and derails us to a point where reason seems to falter. In a passage that links a magenta-tinged Polke painting of a woman in a bikini to sunburns, to radiation, to a 15-megaton nuclear test on Bikini Atoll

that inflicted generations of damage, to a 600,000-person protest in Berlin, Nogle takes no content as too holy and claims the act of interpretation as one of creation. This is an empowering move, and as Nogle continually, freely associates the work of others—summoning James Baldwin, John Baldessari, Mark Fisher, Fugazi, and plenty of Polke along the way—she neither merely transmits nor riffs.

Instead, through a masterfully original magpie style and blend of ambivalence and candor, Nogle mines and multiplies what a patriarchal, late-capitalist society would have as a single image, persona, and history, rendering it all more complex and uncertain.

—*Isabel Parkes*

Teach Me How to Dougie: D'Ette Nogle Attilia Fattori Franchini

When I finally met D'Ette Nogle last February, I realized that I was already familiar with her appearance after seeing her videos, many of which feature the artist herself. Her practice—encompassing objects, installation, video, and performance—has always been oriented to question the professionalization of art making. Interested in the thin balance between art and labor, Nogle inquisitively dissects the economic, personal, cultural, and social structures that govern the art field's immediate lived relations and working conditions.

Given that Nogle works full time in education, teaching and learning are recurring themes in her artistic production, as well as training materials, tools, and linguistic constructs. The upbeat video *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Teach Me How to Dougie)* (2009) shows the artist receiving a Dougie lesson.¹ “Can you teach me how to Dougie?”—a man sings. “You know why? Cause all the bitches love me.” Calling upon her personal condition as “a learner, teacher, artist, worker, and consumer,”² the artist adopts different perspectives to observe the complexity of art making and creative labor in post-capitalist societies. Artistic work is exemplary of how laborers in a hyper-atomized industry dominated by asymmetrical power structures, freelance contracts, and verbal offers are exploited and deprived. In the lecture-performance *Bleeding Canvas: Teaching Video* (2019), presented last year at Bodega, New York, Nogle offered a mixture of personal and political information, then began reciting a series of open questions: “Who made the rules? Who were in a position of authority in the media? How does that impact your definition of you?” We—students, viewers, makers—were thus prodded to question how our political and social views are formed, stated, or distorted. “Capitalist realism,” writes Mark Fischer, “is more like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action.”³

Drawing from the language of pop culture while exploring shared affinities between media, artistic persona, and the maintenance of sociocultural values, Nogle questions the articulation of cultural and political thought and its social positioning. Synchronically exhibited next to each other, two identical videos titled *New Painting (Period of Significance)* and *New Painting (Premium Position)* (both 2016) play footage of the actress Kristen Stewart candidly talking about her role in the French movie *Personal Shopper* (2016), analyzing the correspondence between the film narrative and her persona, forcefully aware of the media's influence on art. There is a subtle and revealing sense of humor in the works, unfolding fundamental artistic questions through the paradoxical privileged position of a celebrity.

Nogle's art-making process can be also considered dynamic and dialectical—as a series of idiosyncrasies that problematize literal, singular, and conventional approaches to illustrating labor while questing for the truth. *Wardrobe Selections for Gallery (2013-2018)* (2018), consisting of five fashionably dressed mannequins, was conceived by the artist as a five-year retrospective of Hannah Hoffman through the gallerist's personal wardrobe. The artist

asked Hoffman to select outfits she'd worn at art fairs, private viewings, fundraising dinners, and so on, acknowledging Hoffman's stylistic choices as an extension of her labor. The outfits not only convey a materialization of personal-professional intersections, but also softly surface hidden systems of representation and value distribution. For the exhibition *D'Ette Nogle 2019: Problems and Achievements for Storage* (2019) hosted in an outside location, the artist displayed a mixed presentation of ripped, reproduced, and restaged older works (spanning 2001 to 2019) across four storage unit facilities in Los Angeles. Both spatially and conceptually, the dispersed, almost labyrinthine format unraveled an intersection of memory, authorship, and deeply personal meanings. There was a sense of empowerment, treating self-evaluation and reflection as the hardest of tasks.

In *Smart Casual* (2019), an assembled story of the recent Hong Kong protests, Nogle explores how current events are narrated. Taking into account her role as a reader and a watcher, the artist recognizes the distance between positions of spectatorship and those of the agitators, and investigates the impossibility of portraying truthfully any story that the media has already treated and thereby made biased and fragmented. How do we conjoin the expositive politics that works of art invoke with the political realities underlying art's production and distribution? Nogle's work is an attempt at resolving this question, envisioning a variety of personal roles, facts, power structures, personae, and at time artworks (her upcoming exhibition at Sweetwater, Berlin, in September 2020, will take Sigmar Polke's painting *Schrank* [1963] as its departure point, and as a new possibility of conversation, inquiry, and investigation). It offers an opportunity for personal evaluation while elucidating the complexity of our fragmented selves.

- 1 The Dougie is a hip-hop dance generally performed by moving one's body in a loose style and passing a hand through or near the hair on one's own head. The dance originated in Dallas, and takes its name from similar moves performed by 1980s rapper Doug E. Fresh. The Dougie gained notoriety through rapper Lil' Wil, who scored a hit with his 2007 song “My Dougie.”
- 2 Press release for D'Ette Nogle's *Bleeding Canvas*, Bodega, New York, 2019, <https://bodega-us.org/bleeding-canvas.html>.
- 3 Mark Fischer, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (London: Zero Books, 2009), 16.

33 D'Ette Nogle, *Smart Casual* (detail), 2019. Courtesy: the artist and Bel Ami, Los Angeles

34 (Top) D'Ette Nogle, *Bleeding Canvas*, installation view at Bodega, New York, 2019.

Courtesy: the artist and Bodega, New York

34 (Bottom) D'Ette Nogle, *Smart Casual*, 2019. Courtesy: the artist and Bel Ami, Los Angeles

35 D'Ette Nogle, *Stand Up*, 2019, *Maskulinitäten* installation view at Bonner Kunstverein, 2019. Photo: Mareike Tocha

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Attilia Fattori Franchini, Mousse Magazine, Issue 71, Spring 2020







ARTFORUM

D'Ette Nogle

HANNAH HOFFMAN GALLERY



D'Ette Nogle, *For All the Artists [Work (A-Version)]*, 2015, video, color, sound, 35 minutes 53 seconds.

Have you ever introduced your occupation with a hyphen, slash, or conjunction? Yes, I'm an artist-writer-curator, homemaker and entrepreneur, DJ/activist. You might string together nouns as a feeble form of pushback against the inevitable reductivism of identity's shorthand. Still, even these linguistic acrobatics fail to offer an account of how your different careers might interrelate. D'Ette Nogle's objects, videos, and performances emphasize a natural affinity between art work and other kinds of labor, often foregrounding the professionalization of artmaking.

Take, for instance, her most recent outing, a presentation of restaged and remixed older works within four units of a storage facility in the Arlington Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. Between the title and the press release's parenthetical note about this year marking the artist's forty-fifth birthday, the exhibition is positioned as a portmanteau of a job performance review and a mid-career retrospective.

A monographic survey generally looks back on what an artist has done; curators and art historians work to accentuate themes and locate trajectories of ideas. Critical distance is the byword. Here, Nogle has instead chosen to reflect on her own work. While this could be taken as a narcissistic gesture, Nogle's self-searching is characteristically wry and thoughtful. Describing one's weaknesses is a common task in interviews and year-end reviews—but how often does doing so result in genuine introspection? Or, from the manager's perspective (Nogle played both roles), how accurately can rating schemes—scales of one to five—describe an employee's character?

Nogle's preoccupation with qualitative evaluation runs throughout the exhibition. A linchpin video in the show, presented on an A/V cart in storage unit 471, is a compilation of footage of pregnancies as shown in movies (many with a science-fiction bent), arranged by a gestation period. The beginning is replete with pregnancy tests while the end features quite a bit of screaming. But this artwork about genesis and the difficulty of producing is specifically dedicated to other producers: It is titled *For All the Artists [Work (A-Version)]*, 2015. If Nogle has reservations about making—that aversion referenced in the video's title—then the title's hyphen transubstantiates that barren state into one of fecundity: A version is only one of many possibilities.

Another particularly striking element of the exhibition is the accompanying chapbook, which contains a text by the artists alongside marginalia in red print. Endnotes identify the authors of the latter text: "Curators Club is a platform founded by students at John Marshall High School to express personal visions through themed monthly zines and galleries." In addition to performing, writing, and publicly exhibiting her artwork, Nogle teaches full-time at this Los Angeles high school; she invited the Curators Club to respond to her work after reading about the group in the campus news. (When I spoke with the artist in the week prior to the opening of her exhibition, she was on the picket lines along with thirty thousand other public-school teachers in the city.) The club's students dismiss conventional attitudes toward authority and provide more cutting commentary than is expected of an artist's materials on her own exhibition. Take the work *NOT NOT A POLICE BLACK SITE ;-)*, 2019, which consists of a mannequin dressed in the artist's tie-dyed clothes that spun endlessly in storage unit 572. It was originally exhibited as *NOT NOT A POLICE BLACK SITE ;-)*, 2015, at an exhibition in Chicago, where the mannequin was placed next to a sign adhered to the window that bore the titular words. There, the message could be understood as a reference to the warehouse in Homan Square run by the Chicago Police Department for secret extrajudicial detentions. The artist's position on the situation could be gleaned from the declarative refusal of "NOT" followed by the suspicious wink of the emoticon. But here, wearing a new title and lacking the sign, the mannequin of *NOT NOT A POLICE BLACK SITE ;-)* is devoid of both context and content. The asking of hard questions is not particular to performance reviews; it is also the foundation of ethics. The final comment from the Curators Club is a straightforward and imperturbable as the exhibition, interrogating the resituated mannequin "Why is it so simplistic and does it add to the meaning?"

— *David Muenzer*

ArtReview

D'Ette Nogle at Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles

By Jonathan Griffin



D'Ette Nogle, For All The Artists [Work (A-Version)] (still), 2015, single-channel video, 35 min 53 sec, monitor, A/V c...

It's easy to forget how tranquillisingly reassuring the standard commercial gallery format is until you are obliged to seek out exhibitions in other settings. D'Ette Nogle's exhibition, titled *D'Ette Nogle 2019*, is mounted not in the not-yet-refurbished 1952 Paul Revere Williams-designed modernist villa that will soon be Hannah Hoffman's new home, but in a public storage facility down the street. Access is via the loading bay, then up an unlit stairway. The exhibition is by appointment only, and on my visit, several other viewers shuffle uncertainly through a succession of four storage units separated by dim corridors of padlocked doors. It is like visiting a jail for art.

Putting viewers on their backfoot is, I suspect, one of Nogle's favourite artistic tactics. This exhibition – subtitled *Problems and Achievements for Storage* – is described in the press release as 'a mix of changed, reproduced, ripped (or plucked), and restaged works along with some new and stolen material'. The earliest date on the checklist appended a sculpture titled *2001 ½ from How Deep is Your Love?* (2001), made for an exhibition named after a 1977 Bee Gees single. An illuminated sign reads '2001 ½' – the exhibition's approximate date and also the street number of John Baldessari's studio. There is more to the backstory, of course; a specially printed 'digest' relates the convoluted details, impossible to parse here, alongside guilelessly pointed questions

addressed to the artist by a local high school's Curators Club. ('Do you think the number holds any importance to the viewer or the public?') Pointing at it was *Last Minute Arrow* (2019), a remake of another MDF sign from the 2001 exhibition, allegedly thrown together the day before the opening in order to deflect viewers' attention from other 'bulky' sculptural elements.

I must refrain from describing every piece in *D'Ette Nogle 2019*, but I hope it is already obvious how the most seemingly offhand gestures can accrue around them, in Nogle's work, a range of significances that are temporal, memorial, situational, authorial and – sometimes – deeply personal. *For All The Artists [Work (A-Version)]* (2015) is a compilation of movie clips showing pregnant women, or women giving birth. I don't know if Nogle is a mother, or if the work is solely a metaphor for the artistic process. Which would be more personal?

The final work in the show, presented in a storage unit all its own, floored me in its simple effectiveness. *Stand Up* (2019) is a video showing Nogle in various domestic interiors, doing unpolished standup comedy for an unseen audience. Immediately one gleans she is inhabiting a persona (or personas); sometimes she speaks from a man's perspective, then at other times she adopts a subject position that might match her own. At times she is laugh-out-loud funny. Often she is uncomfortably crude. Maybe I'm slow, but it took me about 15 minutes to realise that Nogle was appropriating verbatim bits by Louis C.K., the disgraced comedian once beloved by progressive liberals. Nogle's détournement of C.K.'s work is at once painfully barbed – a kind of trap – and sweetly generous, pulling out of deep storage material that is, in her hands, almost viable again.

D'Ette Nogle at Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, 29 January – 27 April

From the March 2019 issue of ArtReview

D'Ette Nogle at Public Storage

February 13, 2019

Text by Catherine Wagley



D'Ette Nogle, D'Ette Nogle (installation view) (2019). Image courtesy of the artist, Public Storage, and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles. Photo: Ramsey Alderson.



D'Ette Nogle, D'Ette Nogle (installation view) (2019). Image courtesy of the artist, Public Storage, and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles. Photo: Ramsey Alderson.

It's funny to leave a paused video locked in a storage unit—so pointed out gallery director Ramsey Alderson, who showed me around D'Ette Nogle's current show, spread across four units in the West Adams Public Storage building. In some ways, the conceit is pretty obvious: art lives mostly in storage, and this show includes work that Nogle did years ago and thus has had to store. But self-storage spaces have low overhead, sparse lighting, and an artlessness that helpfully counteracts Nogle's controlled, minimal aesthetic, which can sometimes read as more self-serious than it actually is. In fact, it's the comic, searching, sometimes-awkward zeal that makes her best experiments in artmaking so good.

Unit 381, the first, fullest, and starkest, contains a belabored 2009 riff on Ed Ruscha's 1979 painting *I Don't Want No Retrospective* (a print-out of his painting cut into 12 squares, each placed in wooden trays). Nearby is a stack of flip books—Flipping Through the Best of 2008 (2010)—pages and pages showing Nogle flipping through *Artforum's* Best of 2008 issue, then looking over her shoulder. The energy loosens in Unit 471 with *For All the Artists [Work (A-version)]* (2015), a 35-minute stream of familiar video clips of women discovering their pregnancies, navigating them, choosing to end them, birthing. Mia Farrow feels her devil baby move; Ellen Page pukes in a planter—like Christian Marclay's *The Clock*, it could easily continue forever, only as a less meta, much more precarious and guttural meditation (it's "a little idea that comes out of you—and takes a lot out of you," says Nogle, in the exhibition catalogue, equating childbirth with artmaking).

Nogle's newest video, in Unit 573, in a way pushes failure further: *Stand Up* (2019), playing on a monitor on a cart, shows Nogle performing Louis C.K. monologues in awkward domestic settings, her voice strategically naïve: "I showed my penis to a girl with down syndrome down the street—go ahead and judge me, I was nine, I mean, yeah, I'm still the guy who did it." She goes on and on, in basements, living rooms—her obsession just as dogged and uncomfortable as C.K.'s, but also a slow, thorough burn of patriarchal entitlement's sloppiness. As it turns out, slow burns—of which the show has its share (the skeptical flip through *Artforum*, labor pains drawn out across narratives arcs)—play well in a place meant for locking things up and leaving them for a while.

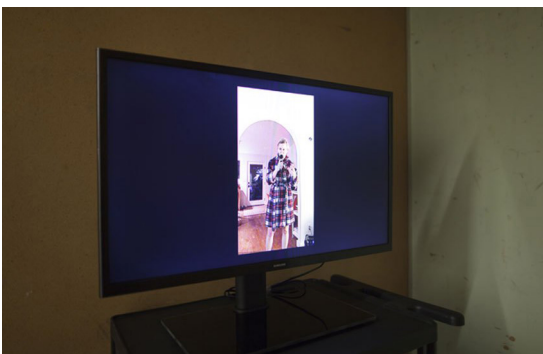
D'Ette Nogle: D'Ette Nogle, 2019 runs from January 29–April 27, 2019 at Hannah Hoffman's offsite Public Storage (3611 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018).



D'Ette Nogle, *For All The Artists [Work (A-Version)]* (2015). Single channel video, monitor, A/V cart, Running time: 00:35:53, 28 ½ x 18 x 62 ¼ inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Public Storage.



D'Ette Nogle, *NOT NOT A POLICE BLACK SITE ;-)* (2019). Mannequin, the artist's clothing, rotating base, 18 x 22 x 68 ½ inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Public Storage.



D'Ette Nogle, *Stand Up* (2019). Single channel video, monitor, A/V cart, Running time: 00:29:57, 28 ½ x 18 x 62 ¼ inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Public Storage.

bodega

Exhibitionary, March 2018



Exhibitionary

Five Shows in March: Gallery Share at Hannah Hoffman



Courtesy Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles

Of all the shows taking place in the frame of LA's gallery sharing initiative, the one at Hannah Hoffman might be the most humorous. This is largely due to two works: the first one, a video by Nora Turato, hits the viewer with contradictory and hilarious zingers as if they were self-conscious punching bags. The second one, an installation by D'Ette Nogle, literally displays the absurd shallowness that reigns in the art world by dressing mannequins with some of Hoffman's own art fair outfits, all of which are chic and certainly art-fair-appropriate. Both works inventively interrogate our idea of convention and appropriateness, while acknowledging that we can't escape the moral and economical systems they stem from. The show also includes good works by Tom Burr, Luchita Hurtado, Nancy Lupo, Dianna Molzan and Henning Fehr & Philipp Rühr.

Hannah Hoffman, 1010 North Highland Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038

ARTnews

Zak Kitnick and D'Ette Nogle Bring Pure Olive Oil to Frieze

BY *Alex Greenberger* POSTED 05/13/15 3:16 PM

Like art, the best kind of oil is the purest. Or at least it's supposed to be that way.

That may have been the thought process behind the work that Zak Kitnick and D'Ette Nogle made for New York gallery Clifton Benevento's booth at Frieze New York, which includes bottles of olive oil that hang from the ceiling of an initially unassuming metal crate. (That's Kitnick's work.)

Before walking into the metal cube, however, viewers see an oversize vinyl banner (Nogle's piece) that reads, "California olive oil is superior," painted in lime-green block letters on a lemon-yellow background. Whether that's true or not is debatable. About 70 percent of the time, a bottle of extra-virgin olive oil, the purest kind of them all, is cut with cheaper stuff. Which means it's impure and not at all superior. Chances are, most of the extra-virgin olive oil in high-end restaurants is this wannabe-pure stuff, and Nogle perhaps spoof this by playing a music from a New York restaurant's playlist from a small speaker in the booth.

Once inside Kitnick's grey-toned crate, viewers can look up and see squarish bottles of olive oil hung from rails at the top. Lit by yellow fluorescent lights, these bottles hang in circles, their dispenser-tops facing down. They're hung so high that they're unattainable. True extra-virgin oil, just like pure art, is an impossible height to reach.



D'Ette Nogle, *California Olive Oil Is Superior*, 2015, vinyl banner.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND CLIFTON BENEVENTO

Los Angeles Times

Review: Brief but potent memory: ‘And yes, I even remember you’ at Aran Cravey

The group exhibition “And yes, I even remember you” at Aran Cravey purports to look at the various ways in which history is created and preserved — a big topic for a small show.

Curated by Eric Kim, it features mostly sculptural works by five artists: Scott Benzel, Patricia Fernández, Hailey Loman, D’Ette Nogle and Mungo Thomson. Kim’s restraint is commendable — there’s no shortage of artists who deal with these issues — and the exhibition has several high points.

Surprisingly interesting is Thomson’s simple gesture of encasing vintage magazine pages in clear Lucite. As you walk around these miniature monoliths, one side is eerily reflected alongside its opposite. A moment in time — literally the turn of a page — is suspended like a fossil in ice.

The artifacts of Fernández’s long-running personal investigation into migrations between Spain and France after the Spanish Civil War make more sense here on simple tables and shelves than they have in more elaborate installations. The objects — small paintings, souvenirs and texts — have a highly intimate quality that draws one into a mysterious narrative, equal parts history and diary.

Even more fugitive is a statement describing a performance by Nogle, in which she vows to attend every social event on curator Kim’s calendar during the exhibition. It suggests a kind of doubling of memory that could be the foundation of any historical record.

Art in America

Staving Off the Sophomore Slump: D'Ette Nogle at Clifton Benevento



Installation view of D'Ette Nogle's exhibition "Michael Clifton & Michael Benevento and D'Ette Nogle Present: Regressing to Mean at Clifton Benevento," New York, 2014. Courtesy the artist and Clifton Benevento, New York. Photo Andres Ramirez.

One of the many pleasures of being finished with school is that you no longer have to deal with standardized tests.

That is unless, in your leisure time, you willingly visit "Michael Clifton & Michael Benevento and D'Ette Nogle Present: Regressing to Mean," an exhibition comprising an interactive installation by Los Angeles-based high school teacher and artist D'Ette Nogle, now at New York gallery Clifton Benevento (through May 24). The artist's second show with the gallery turns the space into something resembling a sterile testing center.

At the entrance, viewers are greeted by a video that invites them to take a two-part exam at a desk set up in the corner. If they accept, the exam is administered by a gallery attendant. The test consists of two booklets administered in succession, in which the same 10 questions are asked in a different order. Thematically, they are based on the phenomenon of *schadenfreude*—pleasure derived from others' misfortune. After taking the test, visitors are informed of their scores.

"I wanted to create a situation in which results could be provided to each person," Nogle told me when she proctored my exam the day before the exhibition opened. "I wanted the viewer to experience, in a way, what I have experienced between my first and second exhibitions: an increase in scrutiny."

In other words, rather than waiting for viewers to pass judgment on her new show—good or bad, better or worse than the previous one—Nogle, 40, aims to pass judgment on them. Test takers are asked to first visit two different booths set up along one wall in the gallery, in which they see, on one side, a female mannequin, with a swipe of white paint on her behind, filing papers. On the other side is a male mannequin, in a coffee-stained shirt, typing on a keyboard. The booths serve as visual prompts for the first two out of 10 questions on the exam. The next eight questions are answered after viewing photocopied images of works of art such as Ed Ruscha's *The Los Angeles County Museum on Fire (1965-68)* in a testing pamphlet handed out at the beginning of the exhibition. The questions are non-verbal. After viewing the prompts, viewers are merely asked to decide "true" or "untrue" based on their gut reaction. The concept of *schadenfreude* is implied in the misfortune depicted in some of the images, but never mentioned explicitly in any of the prompts.

Brienne Walsh, Art in America, May 12, 2014

Because there is no right or wrong answer, in order to take the test methodically, one must set up a subjective criterion. Do you answer each section based on feeling? Or on pattern? For Nogle, this arbitrariness is a metaphor for the ways that the art we see is selected.

“Gallery directors, curators—they are gatekeepers who make subjective decisions, and they determine our access to art over time,” Nogle explained.



On the first section, using my gut to guide my answers, I scored a seven out of 10; on the second section, I thought about whether or not the visual reflected *schadenfreude*, and scored a five. “I’m sorry, but you deviated from the mean,” Nogle said, laughing, when she handed me the pin I received as a result, which depicts a downward-pointing arrow. “You can turn it around if you feel bad,” she added later.

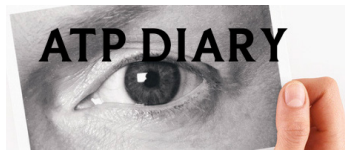
The exhibition read something like an apology from Nogle—a joke she’s cracking about herself before you get a chance to notice the flaw she’s self-conscious about. Many of the objects in the current exhibition—the materials used to make the booths, the folding chairs—were present in her first exhibition at the same gallery, “Information from Two Sources.”

“I wanted these formal elements to be repeated just to sort of acknowledge that this is the same context I was working within before,” she explained. In her opinion, when an art viewer comes in to see a sophomore attempt at a gallery, they want to see the connection with the earlier body of work.

By tying this lineage to the notion of *schadenfreude*, she’s telling the viewer that she’s already considered, and accepted, the possibility of her own failure. Maybe “Regressing From the Mean” scores lower than her last exhibition in your estimation—or maybe it scores higher.



Matteo Mottin, ATP Diary, April 22, 2014



Interview with D'Ette Nogle. Clifton Benevento, N.Y.



MICHAEL CLIFTON & MICHAEL BENEVENTO AND D'ETTE NOGLE PRESENT REGRESSING TO MEAN – CLIFTON BENEVENTO NEW YORK, 2014 – INSTALLATION VIEW

On April 19th inaugurates “**Michael Clifton & Michael Benevento and D’Ette Nogle Present: Regressing to Mean**“, the second solo exhibition by **D’Ette Nogle** (1974, La Mirada, CA; vive e lavora a Los Angeles) with **Clifton Benevento**.

Her work is often in service of the host and the particular context in which its presented. Among her works, the video “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” in which the artist dances with some of her students from Fairfax High School in Los Angeles, putting into practice the assumption that a teacher should learn from the culture of her students in order to develop the right educational practice; in “Reality / Relax” she pays tribute to the structure of Dan Graham’s 1969 “Lax / Relax” performance by reading at home,

with her parents, some dialogue transcriptions taken from reality shows. For the 2012 edition of “Made in LA”, the biennial organized by the **Hammer Museum** in **Los Angeles**, she played inside of the museum the bells used during meditation sessions.

Matteo Mottin: Could you tell me about “Michael Clifton & Michael Benevento and D’Ette Nogle Present: Regressing to Mean”? How is it structured?

D’Ette Nogle: The structure supports a testing exercise. Participants take two brief 10-question tests, Form A and Form B. The 10-question test presents visual information and the two answer choices are A) true or B) untrue. As soon as the participant completes Form A, their test is scored and they are informed of their results. Then they will complete Form B.



MICHAEL CLIFTON & MICHAEL BENEVENTO AND D’ETTE NOGLE PRESENT REGRESSING TO MEAN – CLIFTON BENEVENTO NEW YORK, 2014 – INSTALLATION VIEW

Form B is scored and test-takers are able to determine the change between their results on the two forms of the test. They will know if they: advanced toward the mean, regressed toward the mean, or maintained a consistent position in relation to the mean. The gallery will be organized to support testing by providing an area where participants look at two tableaux that serve as prompts for the first two questions of the test and an area with a table where test-takers may sit and complete the remainder of the test questions. While test-takers wait for their results, they can also make use of a reading table where they may read material from Clifton Benevento’s extensive art library.

MM: “Regressing to Mean” reminds me about my Statistics exams... Why did you choose this title?

DN: First, there is the direct connection to the language of statistics, as you mention, and the idea that when a result is extreme in its first measurement, the second result will be closer to the average. Conversely, if the result is extreme in its second measurement, it will tend to be closer to the average on the first measurement. Also, there is a connection to the other content of the exhibition, the theme of schadenfreude and the potential connection between “meanness” and low self-image on the part of the person feeling schadenfreude. Finally, using elements from my previous show at Clifton Benevento (the office partitions), there is an intentional regression to mean or to communicate a link to my first show at the gallery which is then intended to convey a comparison between the two shows and highlight the vulnerability of the art practice to evaluation or assessment—which is often self-imposed (e.g., “Has she improved or regressed?” or “Have I regressed or is this an improvement?”)

MM: In this exhibition you overturn the common relationship artist-viewer within the exhibition circumstance: here you use a test to give marks to the visitors, and these marks are based on the answers given by a gallery representative. Could you tell me about the reasons behind that?

DN: I see it as an opportunity to consider the typical circumstances that determine how art is viewed and evaluated. In the testing exercise, one person’s subjective answers are compared to another’s, that of Silke Lindner, an employee of the gallery. People working at galleries are often called upon to provide answers to questions about the artist and the art on view. In this case, you have the opportunity to see how your interpretations of the work compare to hers.

MM: You’re using the same grey office partitions you used in your first solo exhibition with the gallery, “Michael Clifton & Michael Benevento and D’Ette Nogle Present: Information from Two Sources” (2012). Besides that, is there any other connection between these two exhibitions?

DN: Each of the two tableaux residing within the office partitions present a scenario, one involving a blonde female and one involving a male. In Information from Two Sources, there was a video within each partitioned space, one presenting the text from an Elle magazine article about the lifestyle of the actress Blake Lively whose role on the series Gossip Girl is characterized in the article as “the perfect escapist heroine for our recession-era daydreams,” and one presenting the narration of a viral video made by an investment publisher named Porter Stanberry called “End of America.” In the video, Stansberry employs fear-mongering and advises potential investors to invest in as much gold and silver as they can afford. Another link to the first exhibition will be a series of three Thematic Posters for Exhibition (Improving, Regressing, Norming). Each of the three will graphically represent improvement, regression, and a consistent relationship to the mean. In the first show, there was an “Investment Opportunity” which presented a portfolio of prints based on scans of my hair, one gold portfolio containing color prints of my blonde hair and one silver portfolio containing black and white prints. I see the “Investment Opportunity” and the Thematic Posters, in their representation of value variations, as an opportunity to consider how art and artists are collected and valued.

MM: This exhibition builds around the notion of schadenfreude, i.e. the joy derived from the misfortunes of others. Why did you decide to deal with this topic?

DN: As a statistical phenomenon, regression toward the mean is also associated with “second-year syndrome” and “the sophomore slump”. I’ve been considering the “sophomore album” and the projections we might be placing on performers or other producers. When we perceive someone’s diminishing success, we may actually be seeking the experience of schadenfreude. When the value judgment is placed on the production of art or some other form of cultural expression, it is difficult to attribute it to the statistical phenomenon or a desire within ourselves. The investment of art largely operates within set conditions that determine value and affect what, by extension, will be valued by others. Within these conditions, it’s difficult to determine what is “true” and what is “untrue.”



MICHAEL CLIFTON & MICHAEL BENEVENTO
AND D'ETTE NOGLE PRESENT REGRESSING TO MEAN – CLIFTON
BENEVENTO NEW YORK, 2014
– INSTALLATION VIEW



MICHAEL CLIFTON & MICHAEL BENEVENTO AND D'ETTE
NOGLE PRESENT REGRESSING TO MEAN – CLIFTON
BENEVENTO NEW YORK, 2014 – INSTALLATION VIEW

Gallerist

ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH 2012

D'Ette Nogle Does the Dougie



D'Ette Nogle, 'Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Teach Me How to Dougie),' 2009. (Courtesy the artist and Clifton Benevento)

Stroll into Clifton Benevento's booth at NADA to see the two slick new Zak Kitnick metal pieces hanging on their back wall, and chances are you will hear some music coming from around a corner.

"Can you teach me how to dougie?" a man sings. "You know why? 'Cause all the bitches love me. All I need is a beat that's super bumping, and for you, you, and you to back it up and dump it!" It's a snippet of the Cali Swag District's "Teach Me How to Dougie," and it's playing on loop in a video by Los Angeles artist D'Ette Nogle.

The video is called *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Teach Me How to Dougie)* (2009), and it's over in just over than a minute—just about the perfect length for video art at a fair, even one as comfortably sized as NADA.

Ms. Nogle appears in the video dancing alongside two male students in a classroom at the city's Fairfax High School, where she teaches. They clap, hands high, and start bouncing in place, hopping from one leg to another. Then they get down low to the ground, and start popping up and down. He's a bit looser and more natural than her, but only by a bit. She picks it up quickly.

It's easily the most purely entertaining piece I saw at NADA yesterday, and also the most uncannily straightforward—patently unpretentious, just a little slice of something that happened slipped into the art fair. It recalls the regime of dance lessons that Ryan McNamara undertook during the 2010 "Greater New York" at MoMA PS1 and Michael Smith's various forays into education, but it handily eludes any easy reference point. It's sincere, but not about technique, as in the former, or as parody, like the latter.

The piece shows how culture happens, how an idea or a form moves from one person and one discourse to another—a man to a woman, a student to a teacher—on its way through a society. (This was shot at least a year and half before the First Lady performed the dougie with students.)

The work also happens to have a great back story. Ms. Nogle explains in a statement that she made it for Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer's Pep Talk Reader website. "Responding to [her] invitation to make a one-minute dance video per Nietzsche's sentiment that he would only believe in a God who knew how to dance," she writes, "I am following the jerkin' style dance moves of two of my students..."

Art in America

D'ETTE NOGLE



View of “Michael Clifton & Michael Benevento and D’Ette Nogle Present: Information from Two Sources,” 2012; at Clifton Benevento.

Walking into “Michael Clifton & Michael Benevento and D’Ette Nogle present: Information from Two Sources” felt something like entering a subway station in *Blade Runner* and becoming disoriented by a cacophony of recorded public announcements. Composed of three single-channel videos playing on monitors mounted on AV carts, as well as two portfolios of photographs of Nogle’s luscious blond hair (one printed in silver and the other in gold), the exhibition managed with very few visual clues to transmit the impression of a dystopian world.

The first video stood like a sentinel near the entrance, instructing viewers on how to experience the show. Trapped in a tiny frame, Nogle sweetly explains that, on a monitor in one viewing room at the rear of the gallery, she will read an *Elle* magazine profile of “Gossip Girl” star Blake Lively; on the monitor in the other, she’ll read the text of financial advisor/publisher Porter Stansberry’s 77-minute doomsday infomercial “End of America” from 2010. When her announcement concludes, a frame reading “Investment Opportunity” flashes on-screen, over which the voice of Michael Clifton, the gallery’s co-owner, reminds visitors to view the portfolios before leaving. Too obviously driving home the show’s point about overly commercialized art, the portfolios themselves are an unnecessary footnote.

Visitors then entered one of two cubicles, the interiors of which felt like spaces for watching an instructional tape at the DMV. The videos shown in each feature Nogle sitting in front of a desk while she recites, like a sexy talking head, the entire text of either Stansberry’s video or Lively’s profile. The former predicts the complete devaluation of the American dollar-and ensuing apocalypse-while at the same time exhorting viewers to buy reports from Stansberry, who was successfully sued for fraud by the Securities and Exchange Commission in 2003. In the latter, Nogle-who herself resembles Lively-peppers her flat monotone with a Valley Girl-like emphasis on phrases like “as if” and “artisanal pizza.” The profile is just as insipid as Stansberry’s infomercial, reading like fawning bubblegum pop composed of an endless stream of name-dropping.

Nogle received her MFA from UCLA in 2000. She makes a living as a public school teacher and does not keep a studio; instead her work manifests in response to specific invitations. For “Made In L.A.,” she used chimes like those rung at the end of meditation sessions to create a sound piece. In “Reality/Relax” (2011) at L.A.’s now-defunct Parker Jones, she paid homage to Dan Graham’s 1969 performance Lax/Relax, with a video installation using scripts from TV shows like “Keeping Up With the Kardashians.” For this, her N.Y. solo debut, she became a soothsayer of societal downfall, one brought on by celebrity worship, fear-mongering and art for money’s sake.

LOS ANGELES I'M YOURS

Made In L.A.: D'Ette Nogle, 37/60



By **Kyle Fitzpatrick**

Posted May 8, 2012

Made In L.A. is coming to the Hammer, Barnsdall Park, LAXART, and billboards around town on June 2 and will showcase sixty emerging, under-recognized Los Angeles artists—one of which will be voted to win a \$100,000 prize. In order to help you make an educated vote this summer, we're counting down to Made In L.A. by showcasing each artist participating in the biennial.

D'Ette Nogle is a Los Angeles performance, video, and visual artist who is heavy on self-reflexive art. She is very meta, if you will. Nogle's work surrounds herself and her artistic practice. She almost has a Woody Allen type of feeling to her art, this self-effacing and brilliant and funny personality and approach to her art making. Like many performance/video artists, her work revolves around her or at least the idea of her. In her mind, she's not the best or brightest or coolest: she's just an artist who could be better, if only she didn't stand in her own way. In her 2009 solo project at UC Irvine entitled Suspended Projection, Nogle shared a series of non-productions, projects and art pieces she meant to do within a series of time she didn't do them. The show incorporated various excuses for her inability to create—such as the photo *The Moment I Realized my Hair Was Getting in the Way of My Art Practice*—and symbols that stand for people who cheered her on for success or failure, Matthew McConaughey being one of them, a person who stands for mobility and inability, success and failure at the same time.

Similarly, Nogle's *Reality/Relax* is a meta piece about the reality of her life and her family's life through video. Referencing Dan Graham's *Lax/Relax*, she filmed her and her parents reading scripts of reality television episodes leading into a juxtaposition of them

bodega

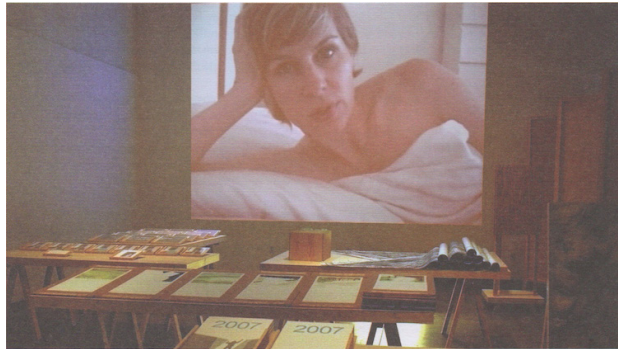
Kyle Fitzpatrick, L.A. I'm Yours, May 8, 2012

relaxing. It's a funny play on what her reality is and what her reality isn't, what her life is versus what her life could be. Other entries into this canon range from her participation in Says I, a group show with Kiersten Puusemp and Made In L.A. friends Math Bass and Dan Finsel, who she is very much alike. Her piece in the show about the self was a giant tarp placed above the office of the gallery entitled Tarp For Gallery Office in addition to Flipping Through The Best of 2008, which was a series of fifteen bound books (which appear to be flipbooks). They seem to get at her slight obsession with work and the work of art. Her piece at Clifton Benevento's Los Angeles centered show 3348 Hours Of Sunshine saw an archway of fresh flowers that went from nice to OK to gross as they went through their cycle of life during the course of the exhibit. Although about Los Angeles and nature, it is almost the most emblematic for her: the piece almost says "Look at this beautiful...!!!...oh, it's dying. Okay."



D'Ette Nogle is a very funny artist, a heady person whose work is tied up in her idea of herself and the idea of art making. She doesn't go to a parodic extreme in portraying herself instead opting for self-deprecating funny pieces that each seem to be an effort for her to get herself out there. We're hoping she brings a video to the exhibition that represents what she thinks of Made In L.A. or at least her process surrounding it. Of course, this is a selfish desire of ours since we'd love to see Reality/Relax in person. If anything, we hope she allows Matthew McConaughey to make a cameo at the Hammer.

ArtReview



Suspended Projection, 2009, single-channel video. Photo: the artist. Courtesy UAG/Room Gallery, Irvine

D'Ette Nogle

Room Gallery, University of California, Irvine

Suspended Projection

1 October—21 November

With her impassive face filling the monitor, the artist silently mouths a chronic frustration: "I - am - having - a - hard - time - making - art - right - now". It is, as it happens, an extraordinarily productive frustration, one which galvanises much of D'Ette Nogle's paradoxical practice and provides the conceptual motivation behind the large number of works crammed into this self-generated retrospective, *Suspended Projection*.

Activating the dormant potentialities that accumulated during her recent eight-year hibernation of marked nonproduction. Nogle has undertaken the partial realisation of previously unrealised works. On simply constructed wood platforms and tabletops on sawhorses, the artist presents 23 newly fabricated old ideas for pieces, most of which are manifest as works on paper (photographs, posters, watercolours, stationery, ephemera and graphite rubbings) accompanied by several sculptures and seven short videos (all starring the artist) screened in continuous sequence on a monitor.

Suspended Projection Projection Video (all works 2009), a large-scale video projected onto the gallery's far wall, in which Nogle speaks directly into the camera from the comfort and intimacy of her bed, offers an index of the show's contents. Reframing the artist-viewer relationship as an exchange between lovers, she addresses her audience through a kind of pillow talk, dryly relating her original intention behind each partially realised project on display with a brief objective description in the past progressive tense "I was going to make this photograph where..." Nogle's looping litany of so many past intentions draws attention to the discrepancies - the compromises, the false starts - between any artwork's initial conception and its subsequent actualisation.

Importantly, each project is never fully actualised but only 'somewhat realized', as her titles would have it; the work is suspended in a noncommittal limbo of permanent incompleteness: photographs are desaturated, and fewer are printed than planned; sculptures are reduced to scaled-down models; materials are substituted; mailers are remailed. Insisting on a certain amount of strategic unfinishedness staves off completion's finality and holds onto a reserve of potential which implies the promise of futurity.

Where Nogle locates liberatory possibility in keeping works almost/not-quite/partially/somewhat realised, she also injects a phenomenal, self-deprecating sense of humor into her art. Her deadpan sensibility often hinges on hilarious and ridiculous titles which follow a consistent two-part format that reiterates the work's progressive states of lack. One straight-faced photograph of the artist with long blond hair, standing in front of her desk with a book, is absurdly but poignantly titled *Untitled (The Moment I Realized My Hair Was Getting in the Way of My Art Practice)*, (*Unrealized 2007*), *Somewhat Realized (Lighter)*, 2009. Nearby, a file box of alphabetised ephemera labelled 'Pick-a-Project' supplies the artist with a mock assurance of easy production.

Ultimately, Nogle not only questions the degree to which an idea must be physically realised in order to constitute an artwork but also challenges the expectations of productivity associated with being an artist. In this she offers us the distinctly contradictory and exhilarating conceptual figure of the prolific nonpractising artist.

Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer