

## CRISTIN TIERNEY

### *Inside Baseball*

April 26 – June 1, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday,  
April 25, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Cristin Tierney Gallery is pleased to present ***Inside Baseball***, a group exhibition examining the ways artists employ humor in



thinking critically about the art world. Participating artists include **Melanie Baker, Joe Fig, Neil Goldberg, MK Guth, Malia Jensen, and Wood and Harrison.** *Inside Baseball* opens with a reception on Thursday, April 25th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, and several of the artists will be present. *Inside Baseball* closes on Saturday, June 1st. This is the second exhibition in the gallery's Lower East Side location.

The term “inside baseball” is commonly used in the United States to refer to specialized knowledge appreciated by a small group of insiders. Inside baseball within the artistic community might include a highly-specific vocabulary such as “artspeak,” or a set of somewhat obscure, embedded meanings such as the symbolic value of a still life. This exhibition, featuring video, sculpture, and painting, closely examines these customs, asking why and how they are normalized.

The studio visit is an art world activity with precise rules of engagement. Traditionally it is an important site of exchange, one in which the artist and visitor learn about each other's interests and hope to make further connections or find projects on which they can collaborate. Sometimes thoughtful or jovial, but other times dreadful and anxiety-ridden, this codified mode of exchange is the focus of Neil Goldberg's *Drag Queen Studio Visits*. In this video, the artist meets with Jackie Beat, a well-known drag queen, to discuss his work entitled *My Father Breathing Into a Mirror*. Their exchange is informal but enlightening, refreshingly frank, and it reinforces for the viewer just how delicate a dance studio conversations can be. Goldberg states: “Drag queens raise criticism, critique—‘reading’—to an art form.”

Joe Fig's painting *The Salon of Newcomers, 1868*, tackles the convention of artist portraiture, and by extension the personas that artists are expected to present.

Whether a stern intellectual or a freewheeling and hard-partying wild child, artists are often subject to stereotypes. Fig's painting, which mimics The Band's eponymous album cover, presents a group of young stylish men gazing intently. The restricted palette emphasizes their gravity, while their poses express a quiet confidence. Underscoring the role that artists' personas play in the interpretation of their work, Fig's choice of subjects is significant. Represented are not contemporary hipsters, but some of modern art's original rebels: Frédéric Bazille, Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Édouard Manet, and Edgar Degas.

Other works in the exhibition ask visitors to look closer at the art being displayed. Malia Jensen's soda-fired sculpture *Fruit and Nuts* presents a still life, a genre of art prized for its celebration of the pleasure as well as the fragility of life. Historically, platters of ripe fruit were deployed in paintings to remind the viewer that all life will fade, but virtuous behavior holds the key to eternal rewards. Keen observers of Jensen's work will note that some of the pieces of fruit are more suggestive than others, morphing into erotic organs or hints thereof. It is a clear, but also tongue-in-cheek, nod to the still life's usual moralistic tone.

MK Guth's editioned book, *Choreography for Looking at Art*, provides instructions to visitors on how to do precisely that: view the artworks. The text asks viewers to select works they do and do not like, and ask themselves why. In an era when it is common to view art through a screen, scrolling past hundreds or thousands of images at a rapid pace, the invitation to slow down and consider an object feels novel. It's also a subtle acknowledgment by the artist that much of the work she creates ultimately receives little more than a glance—and she's in on the joke. Guth's work drolly concludes: "When satisfied / Exit the room."

*Inside Baseball* invites visitors to challenge their ideas of how art is packaged and presented. In an industry that is stereotypically serious, these artists' wry and ironic observations put laughter and self-reflection hand in hand.

For more information, please contact Candace Moeller at +1.212.594.0550 or [candace@cristintierney.com](mailto:candace@cristintierney.com).

Image: Neil Goldberg, *Drag Queen Studio Visits: Jackie Beat*, 2011. single-channel video. 5:54 minutes.