

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

NAIRY BAGHRAMIAN

Scruff of the Neck

9 June – 29 July 2016

Opening Reception: Thursday 9 June, 6-8pm

Marian Goodman Gallery is delighted to announce an exhibition by Nairy Baghramian - the artist's first presentation with the gallery and her first major solo show in London since *The Walker's Day Off* at the Serpentine Gallery in 2010. *Scruff of the Neck* comprises a group of amorphous sculptures unified here in a site-responsive constellation.

Baghramian elucidates that the departure point for the exhibition was to imagine negotiating the space as if you could enter it from the back of a head. Instead of privileging the front opening, the orifice that everyone uses socially – a hierarchy repeated in the architectural idea of the façade as a face, she wants us to take a more ambiguous route, coming in from behind. Hence her idiomatic title, which refers not simply to the neck, but also to the vulnerable folds of skin one finds there; a tender part of the body also redolent with the idea of being trained, parented and controlled.

Inside the head, Baghramian's sculptures plot spatial coordinates also indicated in their titles, and manifest as a proliferation of organic, marble-dusted, white forms braced by polished metal armatures. Leaning against the walls of the ground floor and corncing the upper floor, the sculptures dock onto the given architecture. They do not create space as much as point to it, suggesting in the process that the gallery itself is a kind of speaking apparatus, or a set of jaws.

Accordingly in a humorous, profane way, the sculptures borrow from the material vocabulary of dentistry: in particular bridges – polished metal braces and cosmetic implants – and the idea of necessary self-renovation. But they are not slavish to this association. They have an object-life of their own entailing for instance, a joy in a degree of enigmatic abstraction, the possibilities of material contradictions, and sculptural balance and poise. The body of the notional or fictional subject is strangely missing: the thing to bite into is there, the physical equipment is there, but what might hold them? Once in their senatorial company the viewer-subject becomes the centre.

Nairy Baghramian will open an exhibition at Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent, Belgium later this year that will travel to Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA in 2017. She has been commissioned by the latter to create a new work for the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, due to open in June 2017. She will participate at Documenta 14 and Skulptur Projekte Münster, both in Germany in 2017. Next year, she will present an exhibition at the SMK National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen and in 2018, at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, USA.

Recent exhibitions have been devoted to Baghramian's work at the Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico (2015); Punta della Dogana, Venice, Italy (2015); the Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal (2014); the Art Institute of Chicago, USA (2014); Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2014); MIT Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA (2013); the Sculpture Center, New York, USA (2013); Kunsthalle Mannheim, Germany (2012); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL (2011); Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2010); Studio Voltaire, London, UK (2009); NAK Aachen, Germany (2008); Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden Baden, Germany (2008); Kunstverein Nurnberg, Germany (2007), Skulptur Projekte Münster, Germany (2007) and at the Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2006). She has participated in the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, UK (2012); the 45th International Venice Biennale, Italy (2011); the 8th Berlin Biennial, Germany (2014) and the 5th Berlin Biennial, Germany (2008). She is the recipient of the Zürich Art Prize, Zürich, Switzerland (2016) the Bode Prize, Germany (2014), the Hector Prize, Germany (2012) and the Schering Prize, Germany (2007). The artist lives and works in Berlin.

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