

nairy baghramian

modèle vivant

feb. 11 – mar. 18, 2023

opening:

feb. 11, 12–2 pm

press visit:

tuesday feb. 7, 11 am

#nairybaghramian

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
11850 mexico city

tue – thu, 11am – 6 pm
fri – sat, 11am – 4 pm

press
julia villaseñor
julia@kurimanzutto.com
+52 55 52 56 24 08

www.kurimanzutto.com
@kurimanzutto



Nairy Baghramian presents her second exhibition in kurimanzutto in Mexico City, *Modèle Vivant*, from February 11 to March 18, 2023.

In French, *modèle vivant* refers to the practice of drawing, painting, or sculpting the human figure from a live model; that is, from a person who strikes, assumes, holds a given pose in service to an artist's act of composition. The title of Nairy Baghramian's current exhibition thus not only names her new body of work but also summons a conventional history of studio procedure that often seemed to subsume or to sublimate bodies, depending on one's point of view. Then again, Baghramian's sculptures affirm that points of view can change, sometimes must change—sometimes repeatedly. In the most literal terms, the specific location from which a viewer views any sculpture shifts as the person moves their own body around or in relation to the artwork. More metaphorically, too, the works in *Modèle vivant* ask what a sculptural body might be, and might mean, even when no body is explicitly figured.

Baghramian invokes the long tradition of figural sculpture (of the statue, even) in part through art-historical representation. She first made these works—and deployed this exhibition title—for display late last year at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas, where they lived among a discontinuous but cogent selection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures from the museum's storehouses. At kurimanzutto, Baghramian now interweaves her dozen abstract sculptures with as many figural works by four twentieth-century artists resident in Mexico—Geles Cabrera (b. 1926), Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012), Helen Escobedo (1934–2010), and Ángela Gurría (b. 1929). Cabrera, Catlett, Escobedo, and Gurría's sculpted bodies here are: recumbent, enfolded, upright, prone, fragmented, pieced back together, skeletally articulated. Baghramian's sculptures are similarly disposed, many appearing to recline, sit, stand. She seems in fact to solicit our habits of anthropocentric projection, perhaps also our desires for the easement of recognition, and she does this as well (once again) through language.

Vivant (“living”) insists, grammatically, on a kind of continuous or persistent present. Baghramian has likewise named each individual sculpture in grammatical parallel with her exhibition title. Further, she designates each sculpture by a reflexive verb, a form that certifies the equivalence of subject

and object—reflecting an action back upon its actor. To behave oneself. To apply oneself. To enjoy oneself. Reflexivity makes ready sense in many of Baghramian's titles—*S'éloignant* (“Withdrawing [oneself from a space]”) or *S'allongéant* (“Reclining” [laying oneself down]), for instance. Meanwhile, the shared title of her six *S'accrochant* (“Dangling”) sculptures does slightly more work. The suspension of its hefty shapes from prominent hooks conjures an abattoir, which in turn suggests the chilling passivity of body parts hung up by someone else. To which the reflexive verb counters: these sculptures are not hung up so much as they are hanging *on*.

–Kate Nesin

about the artist

Nairy Baghramian (b. 1971, Isfahan, Iran) lives and works in Berlin.

Recent major solo exhibitions include Nairy Baghramian: *Modèle vivant*, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX (2022); *Misfits*, Fondazione Furla, Galleria d'Arte Moderna (GAM), Milan; *Breath Holding Spell*, Vienna Secession, Austria (2021); *Nairy Baghramian*, Carré d'Art-Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes, France (2020); *Privileged points*, Musée d'Art Contemporain du Luxembourg (2019); *Nairy Baghramian*, Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2018); *Déformation Professionnelle*, S.M.A.K.- Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium; Walker Art Museum, Minneapolis, MN; Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Germany (2016–2017); *Scruff of the Neck (Supplements)*, Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland (2016); *Hand Me Down*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2015); *Nairy Baghramian: Fluffing the Pillows (Moorings, Gurneys, Silos, Mops News Rack, Railing)*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA (2013); *Retainer*, Sculpture Center, New York, NY (2013); *Butcher, Barber, Angler & Others*, Studio Voltaire, London (2009); *Affairen. Ein semiotisches Haus, das nie gebaut wurde Zu Gast: Janette Laverrière und Henrik Olesen*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany (2008); *It Is Not at Home*, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2006), among others.

Baghramian has been curated into group exhibitions at the following institutions: The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago, IL (2021); Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA (2020); Kunstverein Hannover, Germany (2020); The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, IL (2020); San Francisco Museum of

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Modern Art (SFMOMA), CA (2019); The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2019); Malmö Konsthall, Sweden; The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2018); Punta della Dogana, Venice (2015); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2012); Kunsthaus Dresden, Germany (2012); Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremberg, Germany (2012); Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2011); Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2010); Bergen Kunsthall, Norway (2009); Tate Modern, London (2008); among others.

The artist has also participated in the following biennials and festivals: Performa 19 Biennial, NY (2019); 14e Biennale de Lyon, France (2017); documenta 14, Kassel, Germany (2017); Skulptur Projekte Münster 2017, Germany; Parasophia: Kyoto International Festival of Contemporary Culture, Japan (2015); 8 Berlin Biennale (2014); Glasgow International, Scotland (2012); 45th Venice Biennial (2011); 5 Berlin Biennale (2008).

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