

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.

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