

Amateurs

Duration: Apr 23rd to Aug 9th, 2008

Location: CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, California College of the Arts
(1111 Eighth Street, San Francisco CA 94107)

Participating artists: Johanna Billing, Jennifer Bornstein, Andrea Bowers, Phil Collins, Jeremy Deller, Harrell Fletcher, Josh Greene, Cameron Jamie, Alan Kane, Long March Project, Yoshua Okon, Michele O' Marah, Hirsch Perlman, Jim Shaw, Simon Starling, Javier Téllez, Jeffrey Vallance, and Eric Wesley.

Curator: Ralph Rugoff

Amateurs surveys a terrain of artistic practice that departs from the hyperprofessionalization characterizing so much cultural production today. Whether working as amateurs in disciplines beyond the art world or collaborating with amateur practitioners, the artists featured in this exhibition refuse to let the experts have the last word. They are committed instead to a democratization of artistic production — one that often invites us, the viewers, to reflect upon our own roles and question our basic assumptions about authorship and expertise.

Bringing together work from the past 25 years, the exhibition explores the role of the amateur in investigating areas that are ignored by professional practitioners, and also in developing a modus operandi that departs from established technical, formal, and conceptual standards. Many of the featured artists celebrate amateur cultural practices for their “impurity” — their accidental or indifferent mixing of genres, aesthetics, and symbolic codes. They embrace “professional amateurism” (no matter how paradoxical it might sound) as a critical strategy and look askance at the narrow limits defining mainstream contemporary art.

Amateurs will be accompanied by a full-color catalog with essays by exhibition curator Ralph Rugoff and the scholar John Roberts.

About the CCA Wattis Institute

The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts was established in 1998 in San Francisco at California College of the Arts. It serves as a forum for the presentation and discussion of international contemporary art and curatorial practice. Through groundbreaking exhibitions, the Capp Street Project residency program, lectures, symposia, and publications, the Wattis Institute has become one of the leading art institutions in the United States and an active site for contemporary culture in the Bay Area.

Amateurs is made possible by an Emily Hall Tremaine Exhibition Award.

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