

Sara Greenberger Rafferty

Sara Greenberger Rafferty's artwork combines two disparate traditions: comedy and popular entertainment with the keen visual vocabulary of photography and conceptual art. Using theatrical elements like props, sets, and the stage, she creates work that revolves around practical jokes, gags, and the absurd. A hammer doubles as a microphone, pies fly through the air, and spotlights hint at a show just missed or only about to begin.

While she works in a range of media, Rafferty is strongly influenced by photography. Her images, such as *Performance Document: Self Portrait with Pancakes* (2003–06), are aesthetically reminiscent of the photographs made by conceptual and performance artists like Bruce Nauman. In her drawing practice, she incorporates imagery she finds in sheet music, photographic documents, and other published ephemera.

Featured prominently in Rafferty's P.S.1 exhibition are *Splat!* (2006) and *Target Practice* (2006), two works that incorporate the artist's flying pies motif. *Splat!* consists of three pies that appear to have just hit someone in the face, the cream arcing into the air as if it were captured by a stroboscopic camera. *Target Practice* depicts pies that have hit a different mark—sticking to the wall and sliding towards the floor like rotten tomatoes that audience members throw at a lousy act. Though they have hit their targets, the work gives no clue as to who is being mocked, who bombed, or who busted.

Teetering on the verge of hilarity is her 2005 video, *De/Feat*, in which the artist attempts to put on a straitjacket all by herself. In a reversal of the classic Houdini escape, Rafferty enacts an equally challenging stunt. The video subtly alludes to the polemics of mental institutions, as well as to the art of illusion.

Sara Greenberger Rafferty's work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions, most recently at Artists Space, Marvelli Gallery, and Andrew Kreps Gallery in New York, and at Champion Fine Art in Los Angeles. She is co-editor, with Matt Keegan, of the annual artists' publication *North Drive Press*. Rafferty is also the author/publisher of numerous artist's books, including *Social Studies Workbook* (1999) and *Steaks, Cakes, and Killers* (2001). She recently received an M.F.A. from Columbia University. In October 2005, she was married to Kyle Rafferty.

This exhibition is organized by P.S.1 Director Alanna Heiss.

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