

# ARTFORUM

## Kathryn Andrews

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Left: **Kathryn Andrews**, *Rainbow Successor*, 2011, stainless steel, rented costume, 73 x 51 3/4 x 48". (Photo: Brian Forrest) Right: **View of "First Among Equals,"** 2012. Foreground: Kathryn Andrews, *Serial Killer*, 2012. Background: Mateo Tannatt (in collaboration with Jesse Willenbring), *Studio Complex/The Yellow Book*, 2012. (Photo: Aaron Iglar/Greenhouse Media.)

*This summer, the Los Angeles–based artist Kathryn Andrews is presenting work in Basel, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. For Art Basel’s Art Parcours program, her new site-specific performance event, titled *Voix de ville* (Voice of the City), will take place on June 13. In Philadelphia, Andrews presents *Serial Killer* in the group show “*First Among Equals*” at the Institute of Contemporary Art through August 12. Andrews has also been selected for “*Made in L.A. 2012*,” the first Los Angeles Biennial, for which her sculptures will be on view at the Hammer Museum from June 2 to September 2.*

**THE PIECE I’M MAKING FOR ART PARCOURS** is a spectacle-type event with a series of five stage sets that each have different images: They’re all stock pictures of idyllic landscapes or people interacting with odd objects—a clown with a large balloon, a drunken man with a beer glass, a giant camel head looming over desert pyramids, a Swiss chalet. Within this architectural framework, which will be installed in a sort of zigzag, there will be a series of vaudevillian performances. My intention is to create a situation that questions how we locate the subject of the work and the viewer. The performers will do their routines, one will begin just as another ends, and their acts will be seductive, courting the viewer’s

attention. The viewers will get drawn into the stage sets and caught there, framed by the acts. They may start to feel like both tourists and performers—constantly in motion, pursuing the next attraction, yet unable to move freely due to the spatial constraints of the sets. I'm excited about this, because most of my previous works deal with how we perceive a sculpture or painting as a static scenario rather than as an active event. I suppose I'm trying to take that question to performance and go another way with it: To what degree do we perceive something as seemingly lively as performance as image? And what happens when the viewer is involved in breaking its traditional frame?

The floor and wall sculptures I'm showing in "Made in L.A." are among those active works of mine that have a theatrical quality; they function as props or sets. But the viewer is invited to consider himself or herself as their subject, as a performer. Complicating that, components in each sculpture—a clown suit, for instance—are rented, so each work exists in a temporal exchange that is ongoing. It implies a history of the bodies that once inhabited that costume, or the bodies that will inhabit it.

The piece I'm showing at ICA, *Serial Killer*, is something of a bridge between these two shows. The work consists of a mobile fence on wheels. Once a month a performer—a human statue—enters the space, grabs the fence, and moves it unusually close to another work within the show. The statue subsequently stands still next to the fence for two hours and then leaves. But the fence stays there for a month, when another human statue comes in and moves it to a new location. Over the course of the exhibition, this fence is constantly reframing the works. It creates a series of triangulations between the viewer, the performer, and the other artists' pieces. It asks us how we construct notions of autonomy, and what it means to view an artist's work as a contained situation. It pokes at the impossibility of that.

This work does not require agreement from the participating artists in the show. When museums curate group shows they don't call up every artist and ask them where to place everything: "Who should we put next to you, and how many inches away?" Art institutions rarely do this; they wouldn't be able to function. The curators asked me if they should ask each artist's permission for my piece to be in proximity to theirs. I did not respond, leaving the problem of agency on the museum. I was later told that all the artists were "informed" that this piece would be moving throughout the exhibition, so everyone is at least aware of it.

Often in my work I'm trying to address the relationship of popular desire to specific materials and forms and what happens when that desire goes unchecked. We are all seduced by . . . whatever. There are millions of things out there that suck us in and it's easy to be critical of their mechanisms and our willingness to embrace them. Instead of saying, "Hey, all that shit over there is bad, it dupes us," I hope my work says something more like, "No, actually we suck ourselves in because we really enjoy having a mediated experience." It is sort of a rabbit-hole problem. When we see our own attachment to these illusions, we can laugh at ourselves.

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler