

CATHARINE CZUDEJ

**Not books**

April 14 - June 9, 2018

John Barioni, a man who lives in Merced, California; a man in his late 30's who wears a beard, baseball caps and large T-shirts; a man who has a pool table in his basement and a work station in his garage, is in many respects the prototypical DIY-guy on YouTube. He has uploaded numerous tutorials and pool ball tribute videos to his channel, each one with around 200,000 views. His main focus is on the upkeep of his equipment. His tutorials are about self-made machines that help with that. John Barioni says things like "What I got for you today is ..." and "I'll tell you what ..." When he discusses his routines, he talks about his experience. About how "everybody that owns a pool table should have a ball polisher," that he has seen commercial ball polishers, he has owned them even, but those "are about 500, 600 dollars and you know you can make one for about 35, 40 bucks and they work out better than the commercial ones." Over time John Barioni has developed various kinds of homemade polishers, which, in one video, he presents in a backward timeline, going from the latest model to the first one he ever made. He does so, because it is important that we understand the time and effort that went into building these. It is important that we acknowledge his craftsmanship. It is money saved and now you, too, can build your own pool ball polisher.

When it comes to household culture, the discussion of masculinity has been linked with objects labelled 'tools' rather than appliances. It has been about the difference of 'home-making' and 'making home' (Juliana Mansvelt: *Geographies of consumption: citizenship, space and practice*, Sage Publications, 2005:70). 'Home-making', a feminine function, one that is assumed to comprise consumption and an ethic of care, is one element available to Western women for putting her 'stamp' on her surroundings. While 'making home', a masculine function, is depicted as a productive and economically value producing activity. DIY culture in the US evolved from a simple cost-saving activity of the 1940s and 1950s to an increasingly political activity which stood against the visible trends of mass production, conspicuous consumerism, waste, and the industrial corporate philosophy of planned obsolescence (Ellen Lupton: *D.I.Y.*, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006:18). Much of the twentieth century DIY has been associated with men's home based work. Do It Yourself refers to an ethic of self-sufficiency. It is arguable whether an increasingly sexually integrated workplace and the growth of white collar employment also produced sites of more ambiguous masculinity. "Through direct male control of the physical environment and through the use of tools in a way that evoked pre-industrial manual competence," DIY posed a way by which heterosexual masculinity could be reasserted (Mansvelt:72).

Catharine Czudej's solo show at Ginerva Gambino is titled "Not books." Following her exhibition at the Kölnische Kunstverein in 2016, this is Czudej's second solo show in Cologne. The exhibition is comprised of self-made ball polishers that run on independent generators; modified snap traps and "Marijuana Girl," a large spray paint and gouache painting behind a tinted plexiglass frame that belongs to a series titled "black paintings." "Not books" is celebratory of an intelligence that is not academic but physical and is operating in a culture of utility and entertainment.

Catharine Czudej (\*1985 in Johannesburg, South Africa) lives and works in New York. Her work has been shown at the following galleries and institutions: Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2016); Office Baroque, Brussels (2016/2014); Team Gallery, New York (2016); Off Vendome, New York (2016); Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich (2016); Eden Eden, Berlin (2015); Chewday's, London (2015); Pace Gallery, London (2014); François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles (2014); Ramiken Crucible, New York (2014/2013) et. al.