

# ARTFORUM

Tatum, Charlie, "Zarouhie Abdalian," *Artforum*, November 14, 2018



Zarouhie Abdalian, *Chanson du ricochet*, 2018, ink on wall, 135'.

NEW ORLEANS

## Zarouhie Abdalian

CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER, NEW ORLEANS

900 Camp Street

November 3 - February 10

A seemingly infinite band of delicate cursive text wraps around the walls of two rooms:

"sandpaper, casting flask, devil's claw, steam shovel, razor blade, boom, dipstick,

WeedWacker." This textual collection of tools is the backbone of Zarouhie Abdalian's solo exhibition, which reconsiders the conditions under which we collectively name work. The combination of mundane and obscure implements highlights ignored, undervalued, and blue-collar forms of labor. A complement to this visualization is *Transport Empty*, 2017, a compilation of noisy recordings of a commercial kitchen, a construction zone, an auto repair shop, and other worksites.

Always present in Abdalian's practice is a concern for the ways in which systems of production intersect with the art industry, for art itself is complicit in the obfuscation of labor. Many of the artworks on view examine the concept of the readymade, which divorces everyday objects from both their original functions and their intended users. *Clutch*, 2018, juxtaposes these contexts of production via ceramic sculptures Abdalian created by pressing handfuls of clay onto the motor of a car. The hard shapes of bolts and shafts are visible on one side; traces of the artist's fingerprints remain on the reverse. *Joint (ix)*, 2017, represents another consideration of these ideas: Abdalian polished and plated with nickel a wrench, a compass, and a pair of scissors and then leaned the shiny devices against one another to construct a precarious pyramid. One is left with the sense that the structure could collapse at any moment.

— Charlie Tatum

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