

MODERN PAINTERS



...In Which The Magazine Inspires An Exhibition.

The image above is an installation view of **Samara Golden** and **David Nemeroff**'s current exhibition at **Various Small Fires**, a gallery located in Los Angeles. Originally, the show was called "Midnight Cowboy," after the 1969 film. We previewed the show in our current issue of *Modern Painters*. So suffice it to say that we were surprised—and amused—to learn that the duo had later renamed their exhibition "Modern Painters," as a nod to the magazine itself. As the press materials make clear: ' "Modern Painters" forms itself by talking about itself.' How exactly did we end up being unwittingly conscripted into the exhibition-making process?

A lot of this has to do with the nature of previewing art exhibitions in print, which leaves editors in the unique position of querying artists about work that, in many cases, hasn't even been made yet. (We first emailed Various Small Fires about this show in mid-June; it opened on September 9.) An initial draft of the piece, written by Alex Allenchy, focused on earlier collaborative video works, specifically *Howardina D'Ville Visits Samara Golden's Studio*, 2009. But when Various Small Fires sent images to accompany the piece, they were from a video project entitled *Midnight Cowboy*, which was not mentioned in the first draft. What followed was a stream of email correspondence (and one phone call) between *MP* and Samara Golden, trying to figure out exactly what would be contained within the September exhibition. Golden talked a lot about the working within the "sixth dimension"—and about how *Midnight Cowboy* was shot entirely "into mirrors, or mirror shards."

At some point in time the artists decided to incorporate the process of previewing the exhibition into the exhibition itself. As relayed by *Art in America*: "Though a rough concept was in place, very little had yet materialized. Nevertheless, the publication assiduously pursued the two artists for details and explanations, tracking down Golden while she visited New York in June. Golden and Nemeroff soon after began working with a built-in audience for 'Modern Painters' [through Sept. 30], a nod to the publication's presence in the early stages of their co-production. The exhibition's title points to the ways in which the media increasingly enfolds itself into artistic processes." ("Tracking down" has a nice dramatic edge, and makes us sound a bit like spies, when in reality all we did was call the artist's cell phone number, which she'd given us.)

In any case, kudos to Golden and Nemeroff for "enfolding" us in this slippery game (and thanks for the free publicity!) Perhaps we smell a trend—the recent **Mark Flood** exhibition at **Zach Feuer Gallery**, for instance, included a wall of press clippings about Mark Flood and...the recent Mark Flood exhibition at Zach Feuer Gallery. May journalists and artists forever live at peace, even if we occasionally feel compelled to pursue them assiduously, in pursuit of details about artworks that, thus far, only exist as brain doodles or napkin sketches. And who are we kidding? We all know that contemporary artists wait until two weeks before an exhibition opening to create their work, which they make, while extremely drunk and high, in a single marathon session. This is especially true for artists who live in California.

—Scott Indrisek