

For Immediate Release  
bitforms gallery  
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## June 24 - August 6, 2010

### Theatrical Properties

An art exhibition that positions the everyday object as a prop in our collective storylines featuring work by **Marcela Armas, Michel de Broin, Daniel Canogar, Jean Shin**  
Co-curated by Emily Bates and Laura Blereau, with brochure essay by Sarah Cook

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, June 24, 6:00 - 8:30 PM

**Gallery Summer Hours:** 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Mon-Fri. Free and open to the public  
529 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

*"By definition, a prop is an object that goes on a journey; hence props trace spatial trajectories and create temporal narratives as they track through a given performance."*

- Andrew Sofer "The Stage Life of Props"

bitforms gallery is pleased to announce *Theatrical Properties*, a group exhibition featuring the New York debut of four installations that engage the narrative of everyday objects. Crafting storylines and subtly questioning our habits of consumption, these works use the physical object as a metaphor of our larger cultural identities.

Jean Shin's large-scale photographic series "Profiles" captures monumental figures dramatically engaged in everyday actions. The figures in the photographs are altered sports trophies that have had their basketball, tennis racket and hockey stick replaced with a stroller, hammer, clipboard, or other work-related prop. Enlarged and shown without their pedestals, the individual statues feel uncannily human in their expressions and imperfections. Together these life-size representations of a janitor, handyman, assistant, cashier, mechanic, cook and babysitter celebrate the unsung heroes whose everyday labors ordinarily go unrecognized.

Soaking the gallery wall in burnt motor oil, "Cenit (Peak/Zenith)" by Marcela Armas is a temporal work tracing the brief history drawn by the course of 20<sup>th</sup> century fossil fuel consumption. Slowly pumping a black viscous liquid through a network of plastic piping shaped as a city skyline, the piece highlights waste and extraction as structural supports of contemporary civilization. Unfolding over a period of approximately five days, the tension in this work builds a story of excess. Much like the timeline in a film, the work starts with a place and basic premise which drives plot forward until reaching its climactic moment of release.

The fulfillment of desire and unchecked realizations are handled in Michel de Broin's work. "Bleed" positions a common household drill as a scarred fountain. Pierced to death, in a reversal of its own power, the tool rests on a pedestal as endless streams of water flow from five holes in its dead body. Exploiting its circular and self-reflexive narrative, the piece poses unanswerable questions of its creation and destruction. Might the object have been left out accidentally by gallery staff before opening the exhibition? Is it really part of the exhibition? A literal confrontation with the ritualistic unseen action and sacrifice for the sake of display- its reality is troubled.

Daniel Canogar uses art installation as a vehicle that reanimates the lifeless, reviving a collective portrait of secrets contained in discarded electronic materials. In "Pneuma 3" the ephemeral lifeblood of a telephone signal serves as a metaphor for technological mortality. A relic in the age of information, the wires in this work were found in a dumpster near the artist's home. Flickering with light, the illuminated color cabling in this sculpture evokes both the stage and crackling communications, reminding us of our own fragile bodies and natural information exchanges. Defined as "breath" by the ancient Greeks, *pneuma* is a vehicle of *logos*, which structures the continuum of matter.

**For images and more information on the exhibition please visit:**  
[www.bitforms.com](http://www.bitforms.com)

### Directions to bitforms gallery

Nearest subway is the C/E to 23rd St in Chelsea

**bitforms gallery** is devoted to emerging and established artists who embrace new media and contemporary art practice.

### Artist Biographies

**Marcela Armas** (b. 1976, Mexico) is an artist that often works site-specifically with installation, video and sound actions. Relating specifically to the urban situation, her work is a reflection on capitalistic modes of consumption. Her work has been exhibited in Mexico, United States, Colombia, Spain, Brasil, Canada and Italy. In addition to public interventions on the street, her recent solo exhibitions include Museo de la Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico City, Fundación del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México, San Miguel de Allende. Armas' work has also been exhibited at Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, México City; Museo de la Ciudad de México, Zócalo; Palazzo delle Arti Napoli, Naples; Biblioteca Jose Vasconcelos, México City; Centro Cultural Estacion Indianilla, México City; and the Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, México City, among others. The recipient of a grant from the Nacional Foundation for the Arts in Mexico, Armas has also served as an artist in residence at the New Media Research Center, Mexico City. A collaborator of Gilberto Esparza, she has directed experimental electronics workshops with Fundación Telefónica (VIDA 10) in Perú, Argentina, Chile and Mexico. Armas holds a MFA from the Politecnico University in Valencia, Spain, and a BFA from the University of Guanajuato.

**Michel de Broin** (b. 1970, Canada/UK). Through a collection of objects and actions, de Broin's works seek to escape the constraining nature of modern utopian aspirations whilst attempting to reenact them in playful, jesting objects that glorify the referent on the one hand while upstaging it on the other. Drawing on his doubt in the capacity and value of ideas, his sculptural projects seek to put them to the test by literally confronting them with the necessities of reality in assemblage that often troubles the ideas it purports to speak for. Recent solo shows include Plug In, Winnipeg; Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne (Mac/Val), Paris; The National Gallery of Canada, Ontario; Musée national des beaux arts du Québec, Québec City; and Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin. De Broin has also been part of many group exhibitions in Canada, Europe and in the United States, including; Nuit Blanche, Paris; Galerie Xippas, Paris; Toni Tapes, Barcelona; Villa Arson, Nice; Berlinische Galerie, Berlin; Haus Am Waldsee, Berlin; Kunstverein Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg; Christian Nagel, Berlin; and Exit Art, New York, among others. De Broin received the Sobey Art Award in 2007. He holds a MFA from L'Université du Québec à Montréal and a BFA from Concordia University.

**Daniel Canogar** (b. 1964, Spain) uses discarded electronic materials in his photography, video, sculpture and installations which constructs portraits of a society and an age. Finding inspiration in the archeology of new media, Canogar brings the dead back to life, revealing their contained secrets. He is presently creating a project for the American Museum of Natural History in New York in addition to a permanent public art installation for two pedestrian bridges in Madrid. Other public commissions include Travesías, a large-scale art installation for the European Parliament's atrium in Brussels; a permanent photographic mural in the Arensa Train Station in Naples, Italy; a public projection on Rio de Janeiro's landmark "Arcos da Lapa"; as well as video projections on Madrid's Puerta de Alcalá monument and Rome's church of San Pietro in Montorio for the Nuit Blanche festival of these cities. Canogar's work has been exhibited at the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Palacio de Velázquez, Madrid; Galería Max Estrella, Madrid; Galería Filomena Soares, Lisbon; Galerie Guy Bärtschi, Geneva; Caprice Horn Gallery, Berlin; Mimmo Scognamiglio Arte Contemporanea, Milan; Centro de Arte Santa Mónica, Barcelona; Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; Offenes Kulturhaus Center for Contemporary Art, Upper Austria, Linz; the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen Museum, Dusseldorf; the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum in Berlin, Mattress Factory Museum, Pittsburgh and the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Canogar holds a MA specializing in photography from New York University and the International Center for Photography, and a BA from Complutense University of Madrid.

**Jean Shin** (b. 1971, South Korea/USA) is nationally recognized for her monumental installations that transform everyday objects into elegant expressions of identity and community. For each project, she amasses vast collections of a particular object—prescription pill bottles, sports trophies, sweaters—which are often sourced through donations from individuals in a participating community. These objects then become the materials for her conceptually rich sculptures, videos and site-specific installations. Distinguished by her meticulous, labor-intensive process, and her engagement of community, Shin's arresting installations reflect individuals' personal lives as well as collective issues that we face as a society. Her work has been widely exhibited in major national museums, including solo exhibitions at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Other venues include the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; the Museum of Art and Design, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Asia Society and Museum, The Brooklyn Museum, Sculpture Center, Socrates Sculpture Park, and Frederieke Taylor Gallery in New York City. Site-specific permanent installations have been commissioned by the US General Services Administration Art in Architecture Award, New York City's Percent for the Arts and MTA Art for Transit. She has received numerous awards, including the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Architecture/Environmental Structures (2008) and Sculpture (2003), Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, and Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Art Award. Shin attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and received a BFA and MS from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.