

# Making Jokes

Humor as a subversive strategy in art

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June 2020

A NETFLIX ORIGINAL COMEDY SPECIAL

# Hannah Gadsby

## *Nanette*



Hannah Gadsby, *Nanette*, Netflix special release June 19, 2018



Installation view, Natalie Baxter, works from *Alt Caps*, *Bloated Flags*, and *Warm Gun* series.  
On view in *Domestic Displays*, Allegheny College Art Galleries, spring 2020  
Photo by Joshua Simpson Photography





Natalie Baxter  
*Clearly Confused II*,  
2018  
Fabric, polyfill and  
pom-poms, 39 x 33 in.



Natalie Baxter  
Top: *My Super Sweet M Sixteen*, 2015  
Fabric and polyfill, 20 x 60 in

R: *Barb*, 2018  
Fabric, polyfill, and fringe 9 x 25 in



# The Soft, 'Impotent' Gun Sculptures Taking On Toxic Masculinity

The artist hopes her benevolent rifles and revolvers will bring both left- and right-wing viewers a moment of pause.

By Priscilla Frank

11/07/2016 09:18 am ET | Updated Nov 07, 2016



L: *HuffPost* article by Priscilla Frank, November 7, 2016

Below: *The Blaze* article by Sara Gonzalez, December 5, 2016



**SARA GONZALES**

As further proof that the main thing feminists have in common is too much time on their hands, artist Natalie Baxter has created a series of sculptures that tackle the fake problem of “toxic masculinity.” Baxter’s sculptures accomplish this important task by portraying guns as “soft,





Natalie Baxter, *Man Hating Feminazi*, 2017. fabric and cotton batting, 32 x 46 in  
*Good Railing*, 2017. Polyfill and cotton batting, 21 x 33 in





*De que mal morira?*

Francisco de Goya  
*Los Caprichos* plate 40: *Of what ill will he die?*, 1799  
Etching, aquatint,  
burnisher, burin, drypoint  
on paper



## Art & Humor: what does it do?

- Questions the way in which we ascribe value to art
- Challenges the boundaries between “high” and “low”, i.e. fine art and mass culture
- Humor in the service of political activism
- Challenges conventions of representation, particularly with regard to gender



Edouard Manet, *Bunch of Asparagus*, 1880. Oil on canvas, approx. 18 x 22 in



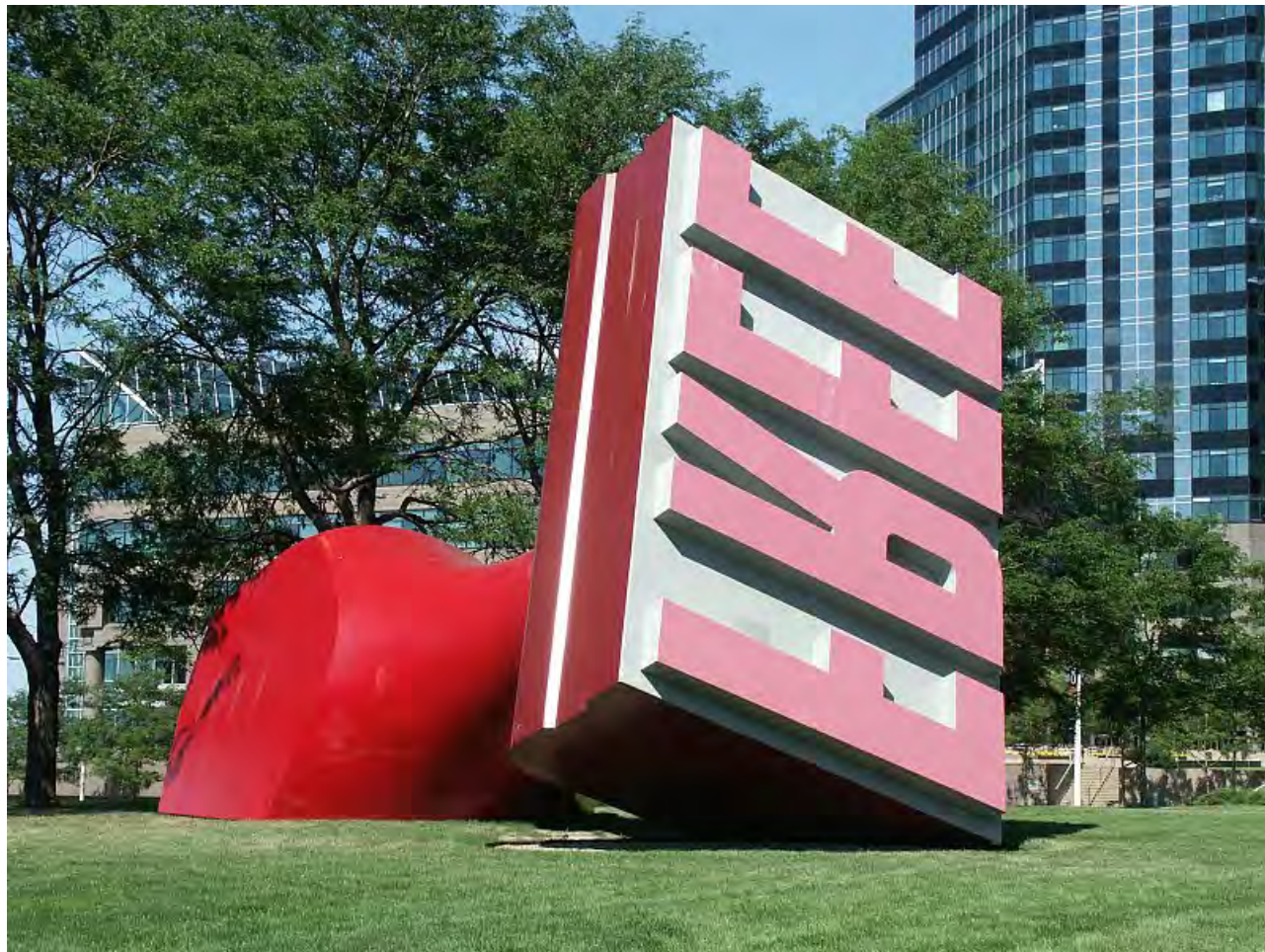


Edouard Manet, *Asparagus*, 1880. oil on canvas, approx. 6 x 8 in.



Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, *Free Stamp*  
Willard Park, Cleveland, Ohio. Steel and aluminum; painted with polyurethane  
Commissioned 1982 by SOHIO, later BP America, Inc.  
Installed October 1991





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Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917 (replica, 1964). Porcelain.





Piero Manzoni, *Merda d'artista*, 1961.  
Tin can, printed paper and excrement





Installation view, John Baldessari, *Tips for Artists Who Want to Sell*, 1966-1968  
Acrylic on canvas

# TIPS FOR ARTISTS WHO WANT TO SELL

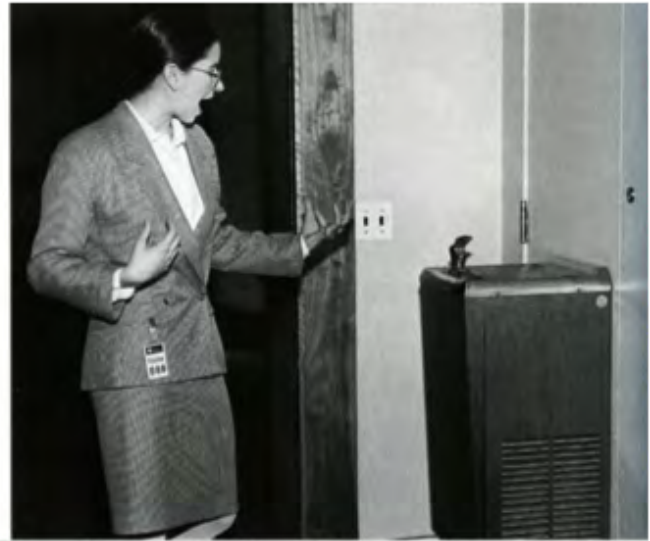
- GENERALLY SPEAKING, PAINTINGS WITH LIGHT COLORS SELL MORE QUICKLY THAN PAINTINGS WITH DARK COLORS.
- SUBJECTS THAT SELL WELL :  
MADONNA AND CHILD, LANDSCAPES,  
FLOWER PAINTINGS, STILL LIVES  
(FREE OF MORBID PROPS ---  
DEAD BIRDS, ETC.), NUDES, MARINE  
PICTURES, ABSTRACTS AND SUR-  
REALISM.
- SUBJECT MATTER IS IMPOR -  
TANT: IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT PA-  
INTINGS WITH COWS AND HENS  
IN THEM COLLECT DUST  
--- WHILE THE SAME PAINTINGS  
WITH BULLS AND ROOSTERS SELL.

John Baldessari  
*Tips for Artists Who  
Want to Sell*, 1966-  
1968  
Acrylic on canvas



Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, performed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989.









Sherrie Levine  
*Fountain (After Marcel  
Duchamp), 1991*  
Cast bronze



Maurizio Cattelan, *America*, 2016. 18-karat gold. Installation view, Guggenheim Museum, on view 2016-17

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Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919



Above: published in 391 n.12, March 1920

LHOOQ is a phonetic play on the French phrase: Elle a chaud au cul (“she has a hot arse”)



To my friend Sam White  
Feb 1923  
Man Ray

lovingly  
Rose Sélavy  
alias Marcel Duchamp

Man Ray  
*Rose Sélavy (Marcel Duchamp)*  
1923  
Gelatin silver print





Man Ray  
*Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette*  
1921 (printed 1930s)  
Gelatin silver print





Florine Stettheimer  
*Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*  
1923



Yasumasa Morimura  
*Doublonnage (Marcel)*, 1988  
Color photograph



Jasper Johns  
*Painting With Two Balls*,  
1960  
Encaustic and collage on  
canvas with objects









Roy Lichtenstein, *Drowning Girl*, 1963. Oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas.











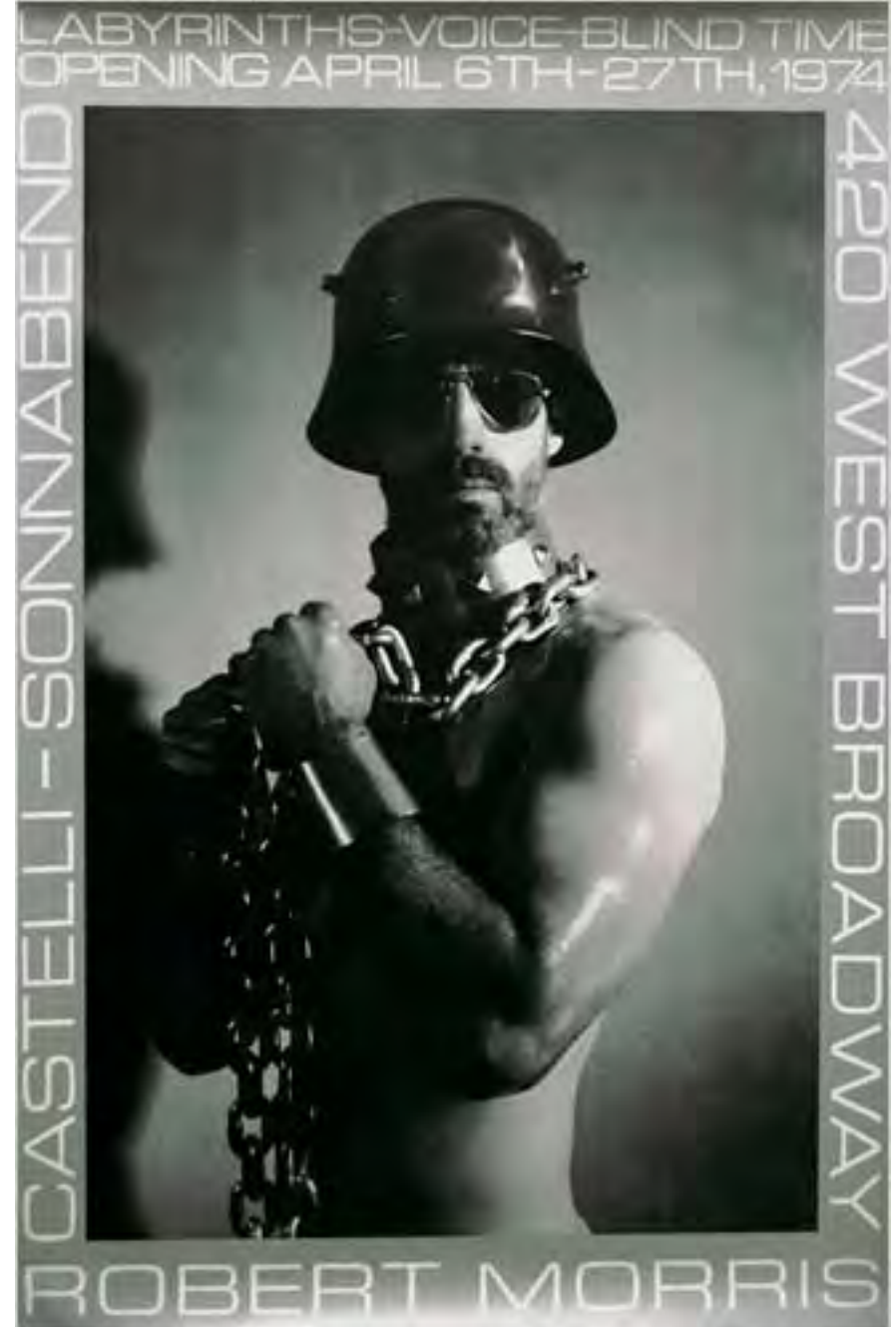
Hanna Wilke, *S.O.S. Starification Object Series*, 1974-1982. Gelatin silver prints with chewing gum sculptures.



*Ed Ruscha Says Goodbye to College Joys,*  
1967

Photo by Jerry McMillian

Ed Ruscha's wedding announcement  
published in *Artforum* v. 5, no. 1, January  
1967



Robert Morris, poster for exhibition at  
Castelli/Sonnabend, 1974



Lynda Benglis, advertisement  
published in *Artforum*, v. 13, no.  
3, November 1974





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# Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?

Less than **5%** of the **artists** in the Modern Art Sections are women, but **85%** of the **nudes** are female.

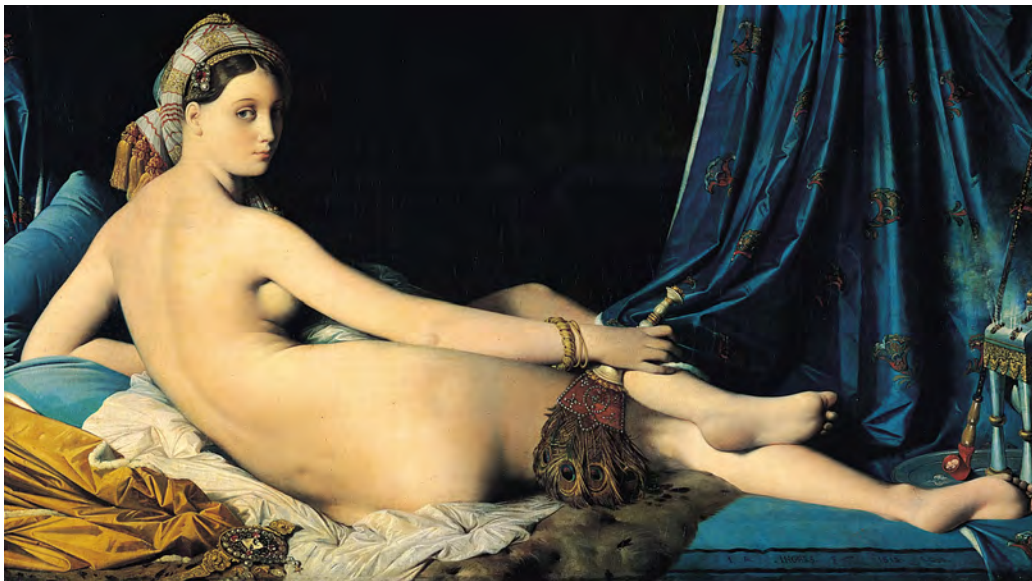
**GUERRILLA GIRLS** Box 1056 Cooper Sta. NY, NY 10276  
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

The Guerilla Girls, *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?*, 1989. Screenprint.

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Left: Jean August Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814





R: Deborah Kass, *Vote Hillary*, 2016.  
Screenprint





Deborah Kass, *Jewish Jackie*, 1992  
Xerox, composition 16 x 20 in





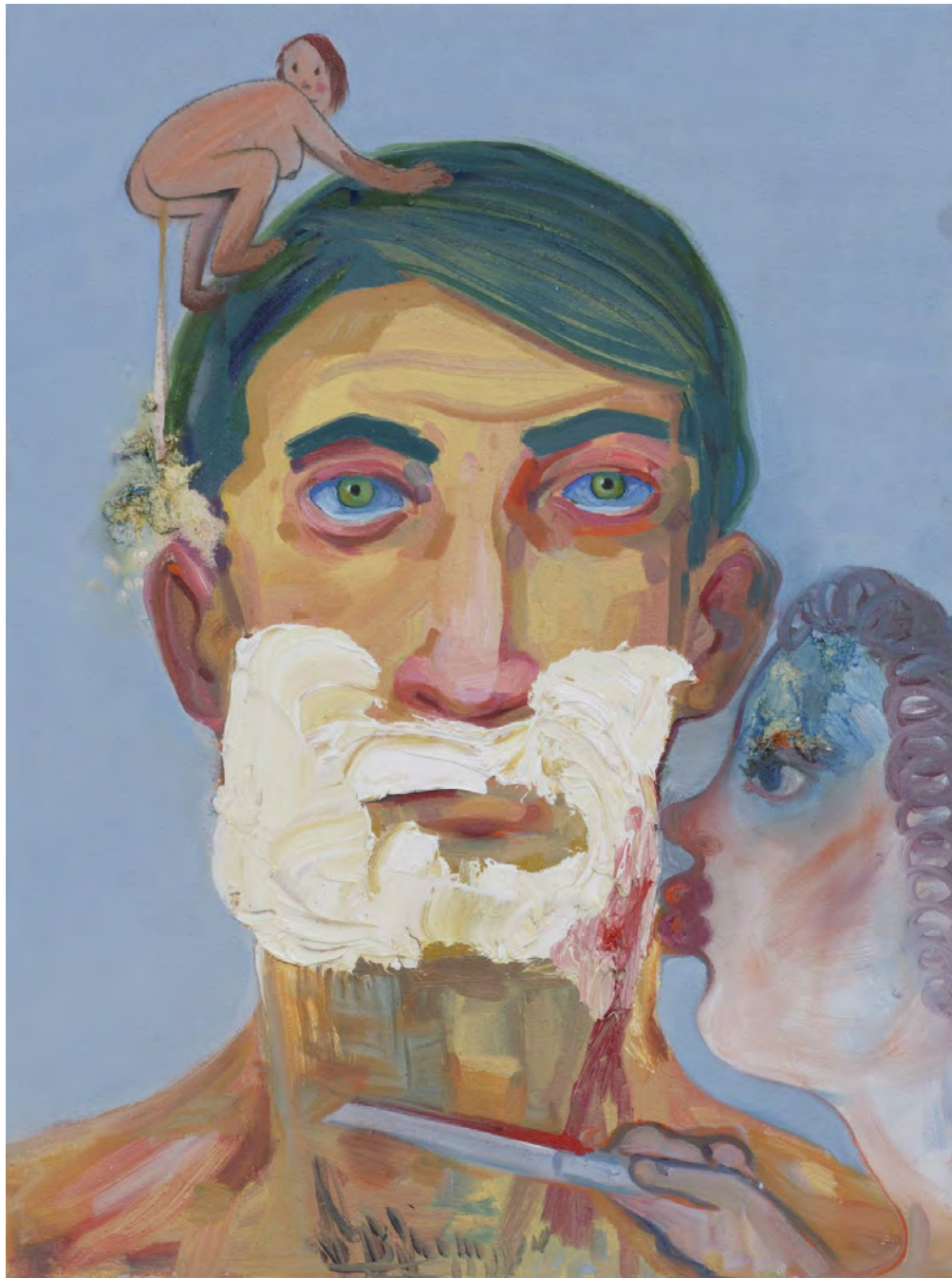
Marianne Jorgensen with the Cast Off Knitters, *Pink M.24 Chaffee*, 2006  
Yarn and thread. Copenhagen, Denmark.

# Jokes in Contemporary Painting





Dana Schutz  
*Sneeze*, 2001  
Oil on canvas.  
19 x 19 inches



Nicole Eisenman  
*Little Shaver*, 2005  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 18 inches



Tala Madani  
*Shit Mom*  
(*Quads*), 2019  
oil on linen  
72 x 72.25 in





Tala Madani  
*Morning Crawling*  
*(Window)*, 2019  
Oil on linen  
21 x 18 in





Tala Madani  
*Nature Nurture*,  
2019  
Oil on linen  
Approx. 16 x 13 in

# Humor as a “Domestic Display”





Natalie Baxter, Selections from *Warm Gun*, 2014-2020; *Alt Caps*, 2017-2019  
*Bloated Flags*, 2016-2020; *The Squad*, 2018  
Photo by Joshua Simpson Photography



Stephanie Kantor, *Trophy Wall*, 2018-2020. Earthenware, glaze, cast bronze, cnc brass, patina, laser cut polyester, blue velvet, poplar. Allegheny College Art Galleries, Spring 2020  
Photo by Joshua Simpson Photography





Stephanie Kantor, details, *Trophy Wall*









Stephanie Kantor  
Detail, *Trophy Wall*





Ian F. Thomas, *second hand*, 2020

Chalk, ceramics, found furniture and found china, knife-rest, oranges, 24-karat lusterware

Installation view, Allegheny College Art Galleries. Photo by Josh Simpson





John Singer Sargent, *The Daughters of Darley Boit*, 1882

Oil on canvas

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



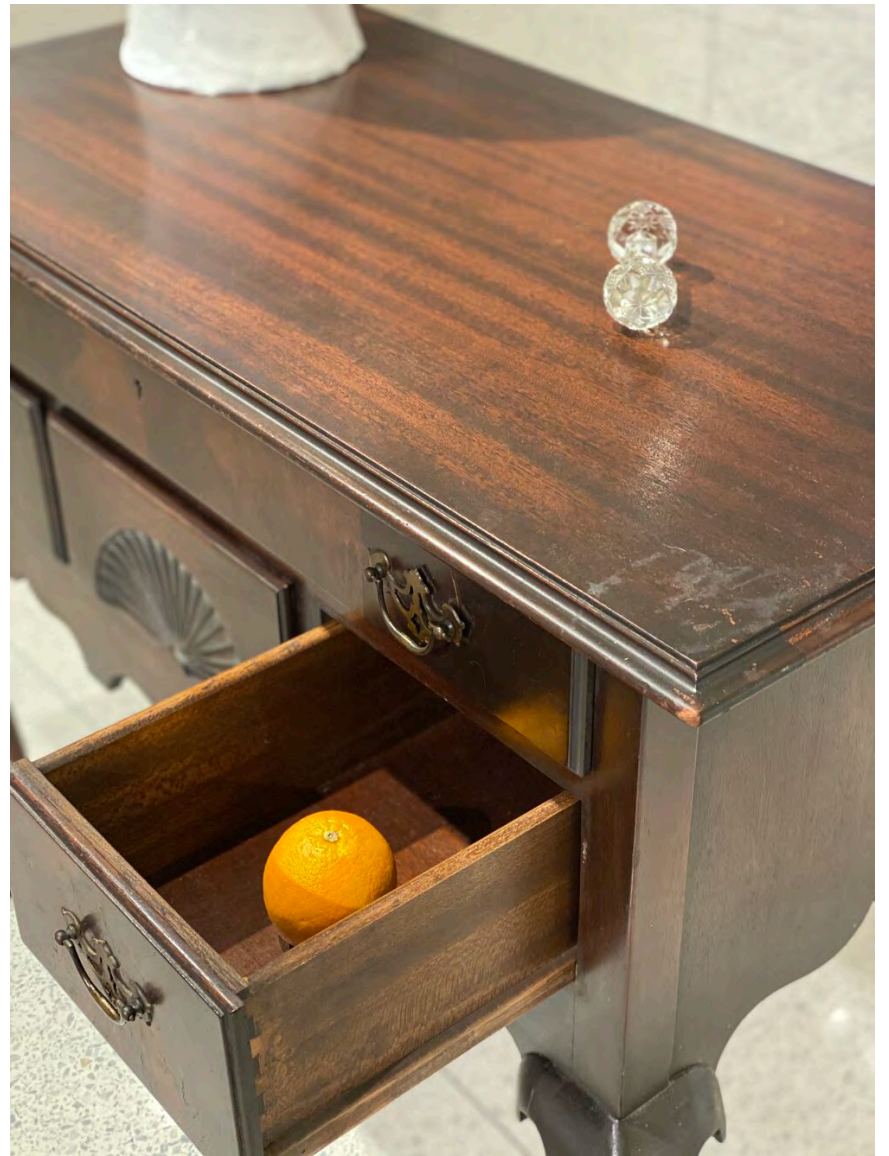
Ian F. Thomas, detail, *Second Hand*, 2020

Installation view, Allegheny College Art Galleries



















Installation view of  
“Maurizio Cattelan: All.”  
Exhibition at the  
Guggenheim Museum,  
New York. 2012.



Installation view at Chatsworth House, plinth boxes by Michael Craig-Martin, 2014.